

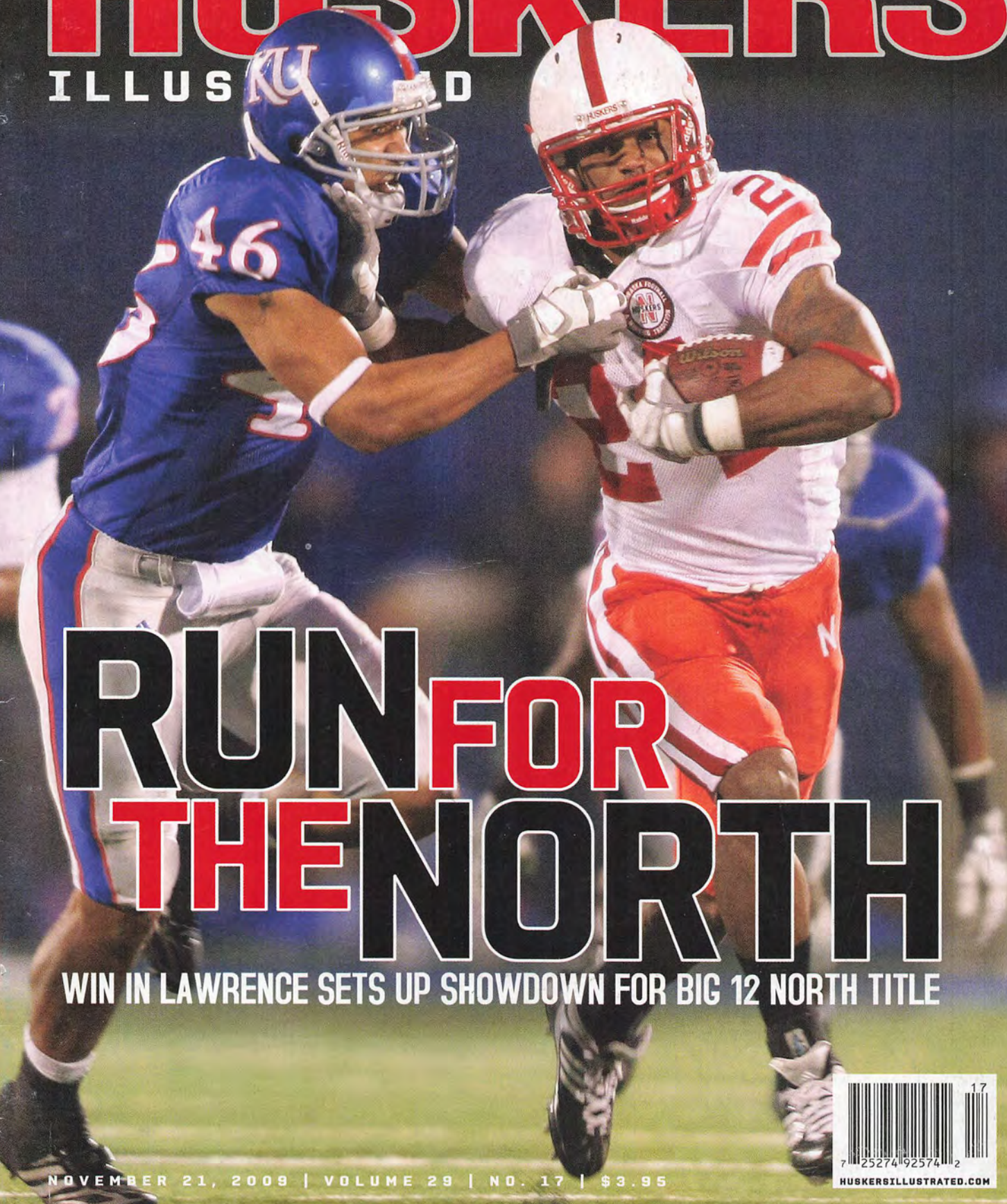
KANSAS STATE PREVIEW



THE ORIGINAL MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO NEBRASKA ATHLETICS

HUSKERS

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NOVEMBER 21, 2009 | VOLUME 29 | NO. 17 | \$3.95

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THE ORIGINAL MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO NEBRASKA ATHLETICS

HUSKERS

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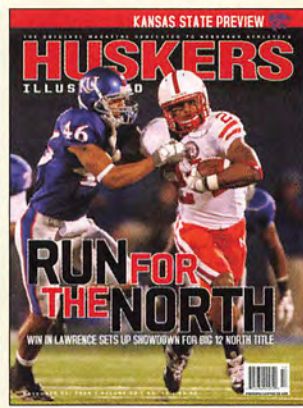
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ON THE COVER

Niles Paul breaks free for a 44-yard kickoff return in the fourth quarter to key a come-from-behind victory for the Huskers in Lawrence, Nebraska can win the Big 12 North with a home win over Kansas State on Saturday.

Photo by Aaron Babcock.



CHASING A TITLE

Nebraska can settle the North title on the field Saturday



THINGS WERE looking bleak with 7:34 remaining in Lawrence.

The Jayhawks had just taken their first lead of the game after capping a 10-play, 89-yard drive with a 21-yard pass from Todd Reesing to Dezmon Briscoe.

The Jayhawks had the momentum and you could see their chests begin to puff.

The Huskers were on the road and while they had success moving the ball behind an efficient Zac Lee, the tension was mounting. Nebraska had scored on three of its last four possessions, but it had been forced to settle for field goals on each of those drives.

But the team remained poised and put together a pair of touchdown drives that ruined KU's Senior Day and set up this week's showdown for the Big 12 North title in Lincoln against Kansas State.

With the game on the line, Roy Helu Jr. showed why this team has missed him this season. After the Kansas touchdown, he ripped off 84 yards on 8 carries to seal the game, including runs of 20, 30 and 14 yards.

Saturday will be a rare chance for two teams to settle the North on the field in a winner-take-all contest. There will be no what-ifs after this game. The winner goes to Dallas to face No. 2 Texas, the loser

stays home. In fact, with a loss, Kansas State will be staying home for a long time, as the Wildcats need the win to earn bowl eligibility.

It will likely be the biggest contest between these two programs since Nov. 15, 2003. Kansas State won that battle 38-9 at Memorial Stadium to douse Nebraska's hopes of playing for the Big 12 title and ultimately decide the fate of head coach Frank Solich. The Wildcats would finish 6-2 and upset Oklahoma, 35-7, for the program's first Big 12 championship.

Nebraska would defeat Colorado, 31-22, fire Solich, and hand Michigan State a 17-3 loss in the Alamo Bowl, behind Bo Pelini as interim coach.

A win next week would give Nebraska its fifth Big 12 North title, just its second of the decade, and a chance for its third Big 12 championship after winning the crown in 1997 (over Texas A&M, 54-15) and 1999 (over Texas, 22-6).

Most fans would not have picked Nebraska to be in the Big 12 title game after the Huskers loss to Iowa State on Oct. 24. But the Huskers are just 60 minutes away from accomplishing a goal they appear to have never doubted. **N**

Send me your comments or story ideas to aaron@huskersillustrated.com.

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DOUBLE TEAM

Nine games into the season, **JARED CRICK** was Nebraska's leading tackler with 57. And **NDAMUKONG SUH** was second with 53. Both, of course, are defensive tackles.

Suh led the Cornhuskers in tackles last season with 76. He was the first interior defensive lineman to lead Nebraska in tackles since 1973, when **JOHN BELL**, a middle guard, had 96.

Actually, Bell was credited with 103 tackles that season. He made seven tackles in Nebraska's 19-3 victory against Texas in the Cotton Bowl game. But bowl-game totals weren't included in official NCAA statistics from 1965 to 2001. So Nebraska's totals didn't include bowl games, either.

In any case, the point is underscored. Suh's accomplishment last season was rare.

And interior defensive linemen being

the team's top two tacklers has never happened. So what Crick and Suh were on pace to do through nine games is unprecedented in the modern era.

That's a reflection on them because Nebraska's defense isn't necessarily conducive to high-tackle numbers for interior linemen. "In fact, you want the honest truth? I believe the way we play so 'heavy' on o-linemen and down people's

middle I would expect that less in our scheme," defensive coordinator and line coach **CARL PELINI** said. "And so, to me, the fact that they're putting up these kind of numbers and playing at this level is just a tribute to their ability. Truthfully,

they play hard.

"I mean, you watch us play, and they're putting up tackle numbers within the tackles, but you're also seeing Suh and Jared making plays on the sidelines. They're 10 yards downfield. So I've got to credit not only their ability, but their effort level and then their fundamentals."

They also "finish plays," said Pelini. "When they get to that point of attack,

they're doing a great job of using their hands and getting rid of people, giving them an opportunity to make the play.

"So I combine all three of those things."

Rather than making the tackles themselves,

DID YOU KNOW?

Ndamukong Suh and Jared Crick are on pace to become the first Husker interior linemen to finish as the team's top two tacklers.

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TOO MUCH MEMORIZATION

Redshirted freshman middle linebacker **WILL COMPTON** benefitted from not playing last season. He's able to react rather than trying to think his way through situations now.

"I memorized too much, and did it kind of as an inexperienced player, just tried memorizing stuff instead of seeing things and knowing what's around you, what's supposed to happen around you," Compton said. "It's way different now. My mindset last year, I was just trying to learn as much as I could and try to get a feel for what I should be doing instead of just trying to go with it."

they're supposed to help others. "Our No. 1 challenge to our d-linemen is to keep guys off the linebackers and let them make plays," Pelini said. "So the fact that they're putting up these numbers is somewhat surprising to me."

The top tackle total for two Cornhusker interior defensive linemen in a season is 208. **WAYNE MEYLAN**, a middle guard, led the 1967 team with 119 tackles, while right defensive tackle **JIM MCCORD** had 89 tackles. Both were first-team all-conference selections. The 1967 team didn't earn a bowl bid and played only 10 games, making their combined total even more remarkable.

Comparing then to now is impossible, however, not only because of how the game was played but also the types of defensive schemes. Nebraska's base alignment was a "50" front, which included two ends, two

tackles and a middle guard – who often had high tackle numbers.

NO OFFENSE INTENDED

After the Baylor game, **NDAMUKONG SUH** brushed past reporters, declining interview requests. Such behavior is rare for Suh, who explained the next week. "I had 16 family members and friends that came to the game that I wanted to go and speak to before we had to get on the plane," he said. "Obviously, we had to do our check-in for the airport and all that stuff. I wanted to get all that out of the way and hang out with them for as much time before we got on the plane, so that's my reason why I didn't come out and do interviews. I think my family's a little bit more important than talking to you guys."



TAKING ON TOO MUCH

NDAMUKONG SUH and **JARED CRICK** had words early in the season. Suh initiated the exchange, but it wasn't what you might think. Early on, "I wasn't letting the game come to me... I was trying to do too much for Suh, and Suh just kind of told me, 'Hey, knock it off. Let's make plays together and just let things come for us,'" Crick said on the Tuesday before the Oklahoma game.

"That's what we've been doing the past couple of weeks, just letting things open up... just slowing down, really, in the game, not trying to force a double-team on myself when it's not there, just letting things happen, taking whatever the offense gives us."

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BRANDON KINNIE



FEAR OF FLYING



Sophomore wide receiver **BRANDON KINNIE** flew for the first time when the Cornhuskers traveled to Virginia

Tech in September. It was an adventure because "I'm scared of heights," he said.

When he boarded the plane, "it was just funny because everybody was looking back at me, every little move and everything that happened," he said. "They were just all laughing at me."

He was probably the only one flying for

the first time, Kinnie said. "Everybody I talked to, 'You've never flown?' Some of them tried to make me scared. Some of them didn't. The ear-popping thing was the biggest thing. I was like, 'What's going on?' They were just trying to tell me to chew gum."

By the trip to Baylor, Kinnie was a flight veteran.

"I try to stay comfortable, listen to my iPod, relax," he said.

Though he had never flown, he had ridden roller coasters, with his eyes closed.

"I ain't going to be up screaming, I promise you that," said Kinnie.

SIDELINES



BECOMING A MAN

After the Cornhuskers' loss against Iowa State, receivers coach **TED GILMORE** opened up competition at the position.

As a result, senior **MENELIK HOLT** and sophomore

CURENSKI GILLEYLEN, who had been starters, found themselves practicing with the scout team.

All of the receivers were expected to take responsibility. "My message to them during that time was: Yelling at you is not going to do it, getting upset. You've got to find your way through this. It's part of becoming a man. It's part of becoming a complete football player.

"My job at that time was to try to instill the confidence in them that they needed. So they've got to do it. Sometime, you've got to cut the umbilical cord."

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Jordan Burroughs

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Blackshirts rank among nation's best

The only numbers that matter are those on the scoreboard. **BO PELINI** will tell you that. Even so, Nebraska's defense has been putting up impressive numbers this season — by keeping big numbers for the opposition off the scoreboard.

Through nine games, the Cornhuskers were ranked No. 2 nationally in scoring defense, allowing an average of only 10.3 points per game. Florida, No. 1 in the polls and BCS rankings, was first (10.1).

Nebraska ranked 10th in rushing defense, 11th in total defense and 21st in pass defense.

At his weekly news conference before the Kansas game, Pelini was asked where he thought his defense ranked nationally. He responded by saying it still needed to improve.

"I don't get into all of that. I know what we're capable of doing," he said. "Unfortunately, I get to watch all the practice film and all the game film, and really break it down to detail. I just know there's

a lot more there for us, knowledge-wise, technique-wise, execution-wise.

"And our guys understand that."

Never mind the rankings, however impressive. "The worst thing we can do is want to sit there and pat ourselves on the back. That's how you get hit in the mouth," Pelini said.

"Our guys, we take a very black-and-white approach in showing them, you know, we did these things well. These things didn't hurt us today, but they could hurt us down the road. Our players understand that, and we just keep working to get better."

Even so, to put the lofty ranking in scoring defense in historical context, only one Nebraska team (1984) has ever finished the season ranked first nationally in that statistical category, while only three Cornhusker teams (1980, 1994, 2003) have ranked second. The 1984 team was ranked No. 1 in both scoring defense and total defense, allowing an average of 9.5 points and 203.3 yards.

Nebraska's 1967 team is the only other to finish the season ranked No. 1 in total

FLASHBACK TO 1984

Record: Overall (10-2), Big Eight (6-1, tie first)

Blackshirts (Typical starters)

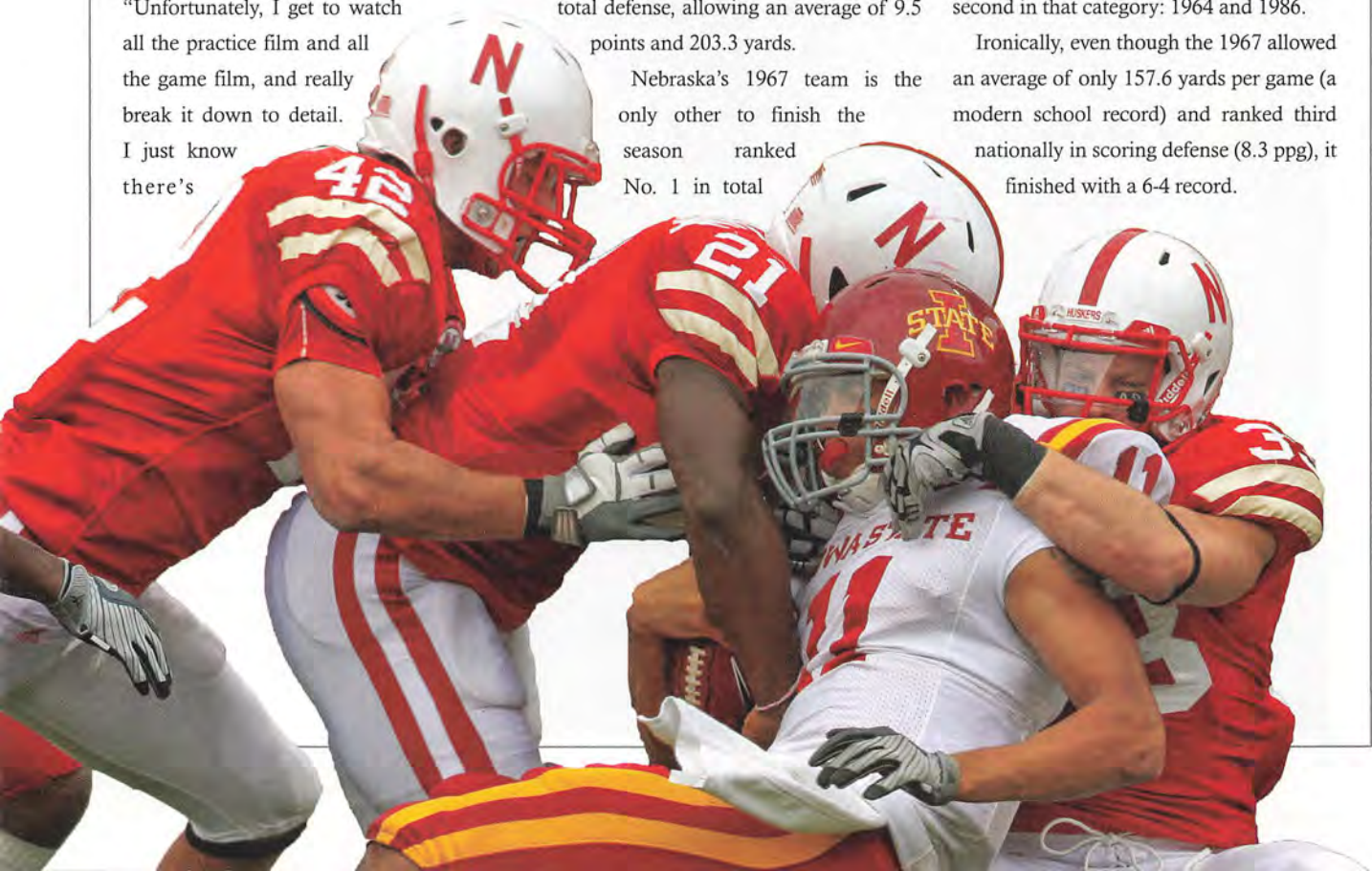
LE — *Bill Weber, 6-2, 210, Sr.
LT — Chris Spachman, 6-5, 250, So.
MG — Ken Graeber, 6-2, 245, Sr.
RT — Rob Stuckey, 6-3, 245
RE — *Scott Strasburger, 6-1, 210, Sr.
LB — Mark Daum, 6-3, 235, Sr.
LB — *Marc Munford, 6-2, 230, So.
LCB — Dave Burke, 5-10, 190, Sr.
RCB — Neil Harris, 6-0, 190, Sr.
or
Dennis Watkins, 5-11, 180, Jr.
M — Mike McCashland, 6-1, 200, Sr.
S — *Bret Clark, 6-3, 200, Sr.

Key back-ups: LT -- Jim Skow, 6-3, 235, Jr.; RT -- Danny Noonan, 6-3, 260, So.
Leading tackler: Marc Munford -- 96

*First-team All-Big Eight
#First-team All-American

defense, and only two others have ranked second in that category: 1964 and 1986.

Ironically, even though the 1967 allowed an average of only 157.6 yards per game (a modern school record) and ranked third nationally in scoring defense (8.3 ppg), it finished with a 6-4 record.



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COOPER MAKES STRIDES



Early in the season, receivers coach **TED GILMORE** said and playing and not thinking about things. “So I think I’ve come a long way in that aspect.”

KHIRY COOPER had the look of a deer in the headlights. Cooper played for the Nebraska baseball team and missed spring practice. So he was behind in learning the system. Cooper, who got his first career start against Texas Tech, wasn’t intimidated by the complexity of Nebraska’s offense, however. “I can only speak for myself,” he said.

His high school coach had NFL experience, and “we kind of had the same stuff,” said Cooper. “So in high school it was like that. When I got here, I was pretty much used to it. I was prepared for it. Obviously, it was a little more on my plate, but I wasn’t overwhelmed with it.”

in the headlights. Cooper played for the Nebraska baseball team and missed spring practice. So he was behind in learning the system.

“I think I’ve come pretty far,” Cooper said recently. “I wouldn’t say a ‘deer in the headlights’ at first, but obviously, I was still thinking too much at the beginning. Now I’m actually getting a feel for it, just going out there

SIDELINES

ALWAYS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

His high school coaches were among friends and family (100 or so) who made the 3-hour trip from Dayton, Texas, to Waco to watch Cody Green’s first collegiate start.

The offensive coordinator, “a guy that I’m really, really close to,” offered some advice, said Green, “You know, ‘Hold onto the ball.’”

Green lost a fumble for the first time “in probably . . . two or three years,” his coach told him. “They never gave me any compliments face to face, so afterwards, he texted me and said that I made him really happy to be my high school coach and things like that,” Green said.

The head coach at Green’s high school, who is “straight-laced, not going to tell me anything, really, I want to hear,” wasn’t at the game, said Green. “So I called him after the game, and he goes, ‘You know what, you choked that second half.’ I said, ‘Golly, come on Coach, it’s my first game.’

“He goes, ‘Yeah, I know. You did a pretty good job.’ Then he called me the next day and he goes, ‘You know what, I watched film. I analyzed it. And it wasn’t that bad . . . you can do better.’ And he just hung up on me. That wasn’t nothing I was expecting.”

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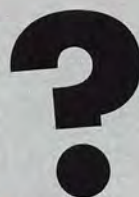
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READING THE FIELD

BY JOE GANZ

Kansas State game was one I'll never forget

NOV. 10, 2007, is a day I'll never forget.

As a lot of Nebraska football fans know, that was the day I had the game of my life. Not only did we beat Kansas State 73-31 to end a five-game losing streak on senior day at Memorial Stadium, but I was fortunate enough to set single-game school records for passing yards (510) and touchdowns (seven), completing 30-of-40 pass attempts.

It was almost a surreal feeling when I look back at it – almost like a blur. It was my first home start, everything happened so fast and then the game was over.

During the game, you don't keep track of how many touchdowns you have or how many yards you have because you're so focused on the game. After they took me out in the fourth quarter, I saw the camera zoom in on me and they put me on the big video board and announced that I had broken some school records and before that, I didn't even know it.

What was really special for me was my dad came down to the sideline where I was sitting right behind the fence and I was able to give him a hug. They caught it on TV, so it was a really special moment. That was probably the thing I remember the most – along with winning the game on senior day for those guys who had suffered through such a rough stretch that year.

To have lost to Kansas 76-39 the week before and then to come back and beat Kansas State by 42 points, I've never seen a week-to-week change like that since I've

been following college football. It was a really odd stretch, but our offense was so dynamic that season and we had so many good play-makers that it was really easy for me to kind of distribute the ball and let them do what they wanted to with it.

I mean no disrespect to Kansas State – they were changing their coverages and doing everything they could – but it was one of those days where everything you were keyed into worked. Everything that you thought was going to happen, coverage-wise, happened and the calls were just perfect.

I'm not sure that we had to throw the ball as much as we did, but with Coach (Bill) Callahan's job on the line, I understand why we did what we did. For that reason, I don't know if anyone else will ever throw the ball that much if we're ahead again, but it was a fun day to just go out there and enjoy ourselves and celebrate with your teammates.

I can remember after my second touchdown pass of the day, which went to Frantz Hardy right down the pipe, I was

sprinting down the field and running up to our student section and pointing and trying to pump the crowd up. By my seventh TD pass, I think I just hugged our center and walked off the field.

If there's a definition of being "in the zone" for my career, it was definitely that game. It was almost like it was a seven-on-seven drill with everything scripted for us to be successful. Everything just worked out and we had really great receivers – Maurice Purify, Nate Swift, Todd Peterson, Frantz Hardy and Terrence Nunn – with all those guys, it was pretty easy for me. And it's usually not.

One the big reasons we were able to throw for so many yards in those last three games of 2007 was that we had to score – there's no way to sugar-coat it – and I probably took more chances than I normally would have and a lot more chances than I ever took during my senior year. Against Kansas State, all of those chances I took ended up working out, and it definitely made for a memorable day. **N**



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PONCA, NE



JUSTIN BLATCHFORD shed his anonymity a minute and a half into Nebraska's 20-10 victory at Baylor. The game clock showed 13:31 remaining in the first quarter after the walk-on cornerback from Ponca, Neb., caught a blocked punt and returned it 25 yards for a touchdown.

"It was kind of unexpected," Blatchford said the week after the game. "I just heard a thump and looked up and there the ball was...just sitting there, waiting for it for however long.

"I don't know (how long). It seemed like forever, though."

Once he had the ball, the rest was instinctive. Blatchford rushed for more than 1,000 yards in each of his final three seasons in high school and 66 touchdowns during his career.

"I guess that (playing running back) helped a lot," he said.

Folks back home bombarded him with text messages after the game. "It's just great to see that other people are watching," said the redshirted freshman. "It's really a dream come true. It's hard to believe, actually. I never thought anything like that would happen. It's just awesome."

Blatchford never hesitated when **JEFF JAMROG**, Nebraska's assistant athletic director for football, contacted him about walking on. "It was a no-doubter," Blatchford said.

"That's what I wanted to do my whole life. My whole family is just a huge supporter of the Nebraska tradition. It's just a great opportunity for me. I'm just blessed."

Ponca has produced three Cornhusker football lettermen, and all three walked on. They set a standard for Blatchford. "They worked so hard, so that's a lot of pressure on me, I guess. But I know them, and they're just great guys," he said. "They're the ones that inspired me to do this."

His dad inspired him to play golf, another of his athletic passions. Yes, he played golf as well as basketball and baseball in high school. He earned four letters in golf, finishing in the top 10 at the state championships in each of his four years and leading Ponca to a runner-up finish as a junior.

Blatchford's high school football coach also coached the track team and tried to persuade him to run track. "They wanted me to do both, but I don't think it could have worked out," he said.

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Andy Poulosky, DE (2006-07)

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► The Days of 56 Rodeo is held annually, the last weekend in June. The rodeo arena is located on the west edge of Ponca.

► Ponca was established in 1856 and is Nebraska's fourth oldest town.

SIDELINES



SO EASY A CAVEMAN CAN DO IT, OR NOT

JARED CRICK was the Big 12 Defensive Player of the Week and earned national honors as well for his career performance against Baylor. As a result, he was among those up-front during Nebraska's weekly teleconference on the Tuesday after the game.

"It's an honor, no doubt, but it's awkward," Crick said.

"All of us (in the defensive line) really did a great job. To single out one person for this award, it's awkward to me."

Defensive coordinator **CARL PELINI**, Crick's position coach, wouldn't have been surprised by such a response. "Did you ever see the Geico caveman commercials? One-word answers, he's monosyllabic, one syllable," Pelini said of Crick. "If it gets beyond one syllable, he's stretching it. Sometimes, he'll open up but not very often. Pretty much a 'yup' is all I get from him, most of the time."



STATE OF THE HUSKERS

BY CURT MCKEEVER

Pelini rewarded by defensive transformation

I'M SURE BO PELINI wanted to crack a smile. After all, the guy who can't stand an offensive shootout had just been asked what he thought of the Big 12 moving closer to becoming a league known more for its ability to prevent such results.

The fuel behind that question could have come from the fact that three of the five league games played on the first Saturday of November were dramatically lower-scoring affairs than the same five match-ups held on Nov. 1, 2008.

Nebraska and Oklahoma scored a combined 13 points, or 77 fewer than in the prior year's match-up.

Kansas State and Kansas produced 27, 46 fewer than their previous meeting.

And the 42 Oklahoma State and Iowa State totaled were 34 under their '08 battle.

Maybe there really is a shift going on in the Big 12?

"Oklahoma has been playing good defense for a long time now and that's why they have won championships," Pelini offered. "Texas has improved defensively and has been playing good defensively, and that has put them in a position to win championships.

"That's what I believe in also, and hopefully that will lead us in the same direction. You can't win championships without playing good defense."

The performance against the Sooners added strength to the argument that Pelini is building something pretty special.

The Huskers harassed quarterback

Landry Jones into a 26-for-58 passing performance that included five interceptions. It was the sixth time a Nebraska opponent had been held to less than 50-percent accuracy.

Four players were credited with making Jones hurry a throw (tackles Ndamukong Suh and Jared Crick each had three such plays).

"Maybe the best front four in college football," Kansas coach Mark Mangino said before seeing the Huskers in person.

On separate occasions earlier in the season, Suh, one of four finalists for the Rotary Lombardi Award given to the top lineman, and Crick had been recognized as the FWAA/Bronko Nagurski National Defensive Player of the Week.

But it's not like once opponents get past them they can breathe easier. Free safety Matt O'Hanlon received the same honor for his three-interception, 12-tackle game against the Sooners.

In that contest, 10 Huskers had at least one pass break-up, which explains why nine games into the season Nebraska ranked No. 2 nationally in pass efficiency defense.

Being what he calls "really good" up front allows Pelini to place strong safety Larry Asante and O'Hanlon deeper because he feels good about how his defense will handle the middle of the field for both the run and pass.

"If you're not good up front and you have to be committing defensive backs and safeties down in the box all the time, then you're very limited in what your

options are," he said. "When you're good up front and you are controlling the line of scrimmage, you can give different looks. You can be more multiple; it allows you to do a lot more things (against) the passing game."

And that, in turn, can leave cornerbacks like Prince Amukamara, Alfonzo Dennard, Dejon Gomes and Anthony West in a lot of advantageous coverage situations.

"They've played well," Pelini said of his starters, Amukamara and Dennard. "They are challenging receivers. They understand where their help is coming from and when they are getting help ...We still fight the urge to shoot ourselves in the foot every now and then with a mental error or a lack of concentration."

The only thing that might possibly keep Pelini from pointing that out would be if his club was unscored upon.

And so the quest continues.

But considering how pitiful Nebraska was when Pelini arrived to now being among the nation's leaders in numerous defensive categories, at least he shouldn't have to force a grin, albeit occasional.

"As we continue to get better and the guys get more comfortable in what we're asking them to do and how we're asking them to do it, I see their confidence growing," he said. "That's when you really can get good...I've seen steady progress, and that aspect of it has been rewarding for me as a coach." **N**



Latravis Washington

6-3, 225, Junior, Quarterback, Bradenton, Fla.

HI: When you moved to quarterback and began wearing No. 15, did you realize the significance of that number, considering you're from Bradenton, Florida?

WASHINGTON: Yeah, I knew what I was getting myself into, backing up a great quarterback in Tommie Frazier, who's also from my hometown. I knew what I was getting myself into. I took on a responsibility and I'm trying to live up to his expectations.

HI: Have you met Tommie, and what can you tell me about him?

WASHINGTON: Oh, Tommie's a cool guy. I hang out with Tommie on kind of a regular basis. We talk about football, we talk about life, we talk about stuff at home. We have a real close relationship. I'll call him for advice. We just hang out. He's just a person I can talk to who can relate to me from being back in Florida. It's really nice having him up here to kind of help me out going through this transition of living in Nebraska.

HI: What do you miss most about playing linebacker?

WASHINGTON: I don't know, just the responsibility that you have to know your assignments, read keys, understand what the offense is trying to do to you. Just competing. Even though we compete at quarterback, it's not that same, aggressive feeling playing linebacker. Always tackling, always hitting people, always engaging with people.

HI: What do you like the most about playing quarterback?

WASHINGTON: Just the pressure. I think I'm a guy that handles pressure really good. I'm a quick learner. Just taking on responsibility and trying to be great. Everybody on the football team, they look at the quarterback to be a leader. I think everybody has leadership but it takes a certain type of leadership to be a quarterback.

HI: Who's your favorite pro athlete, and why?

WASHINGTON: Peyton Manning. The way he approaches the game, and his preparation for the game is unbelievable. I was just watching him on TV the other day and he was just picking defenses apart, audibling out and getting his team in the right play. He's competitive. He competes day in and day out. Even when he's not on the field he's always watching film. You've just got to admire a person with a work ethic like that.

HI: What's your relationship like with your cousin, Fabian Washington?

WASHINGTON: We're real close. I talk to him all the time; I talk to him at least three times a week. Just a guy I can go talk to because he's been in this situation, he's been in college and he knows what it takes to get where he's at. He just always says work hard, compete, don't take plays off and focus every play. Our relationship is very close.

HI: You're stranded on a deserted island. What three possessions do you want to have with you?

WASHINGTON: My phone, some water and I'd have to say a football. Or at least a basketball. Something I could keep myself occupied.

HI: What do you want to do after college?

WASHINGTON: After college, I want to get into broadcasting. I'm a communications major. I think I can talk well with people. I just want to do something that I'm really capable of doing. I also was thinking about coaching and teaching.

HI: What's your favorite sport outside of football?

WASHINGTON: Golf. I've been playing golf since I was in the sixth grade. It's a competitive sport. You're playing against a course, not your opponent. To hit a golf ball you've got to be very focused, trust your technique, because if you don't, you'll slice. My granddad got me into golf, and I've been going about it ever since.

HI: I know you probably miss Florida, but when you go back home, what's something you miss about Nebraska?

WASHINGTON: Just being in this atmosphere on game-time Saturdays. It's the best place in the world to be on Saturday, playing football for Nebraska. You can say, 'I play for Nebraska.' When I go back home I'm fine and dandy with the weather, but there's no place like Nebraska when you think about it. You know, the downtown area, the fans always supporting you, just having your back.



Rik Bonness

Appreciating the Relationships



ON A SATURDAY night when Nebraska was upsetting 20th-ranked Oklahoma in Lincoln, three All-Americans who invested their own blood, sweat and tears in the NU-OU rivalry three decades earlier weren't watching the game on TV, checking the Internet on their phones or even getting up-dated text messages from their friends and former teammates.

Instead, former Husker All-American Rik Bonness and former Sooner All-Americans Lee Roy Selmon and Dewey Selmon were camped out at a Florida hotel for the 30-year reunion of a Tampa Bay Buccaneer team that came within one win of making the Super Bowl.



Actually, Bonness played against all three Selmon brothers, including Lucious, who lined up across from him as a sophomore, and Dewey, who lined up across from him as a junior and senior. Despite losing all three irritating battles, Bonness became a two-time first-team All-American and a first-team Academic All-American his senior year.

One of Nebraska's greatest centers, Bonness counts his blessings that Outland and Lombardi Award-winning Lee Roy Selmon never lined up directly across from him.

Bonness went on to play for five years in the NFL as a linebacker and a special-teams player. He spent one year on a Super Bowl team at Oakland and

four years with Tampa Bay. After football, he graduated from Cornell Law School and became a partner in the state's largest firm.

Now, at 55 and with two grown sons, Bonness can look at the world with a sharper focus and reach an important

RIK BONNESS

LETTERS: 1973-74-75

POSITION: Center

WIFE: Shannon

CHILDREN: Sons Eric, 25; Beau, 23

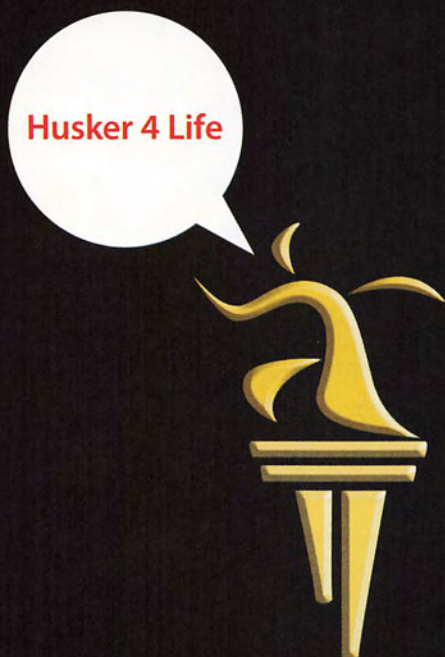
CURRENT: Partner, Kutak Rock, LLP, Omaha

RESIDENCE: Omaha, Neb.

conclusion.

"I've heard Coach (Tom) Osborne say football isn't about the winning and the trophies as much it's about the process, which to me includes the people and the relationships ... and that is so true," Bonness said. "I'm not saying I didn't like the Selmon brothers in college. We didn't know each other except as opponents on game day. But when Dewey, Lee Roy and I played together in Tampa Bay, we went from whatever intense negative feelings we may have had for each other – to a real love for each other. We became, and still are, good friends."

The irony was dramatic. "My locker in Tampa Bay was right between the Selmons," Bonness said. "Lee Roy on one side of me, and Dewey on the other." **N**



Nebraska
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Resilient Wildcats paced by league's leading running back



BY STEVEN M. SIPPLE

IT'S SAFE TO SAY that Daniel Thomas has demonstrated why he was one of Kansas State's most-anticipated junior college additions since quarterback Michael Bishop in 1997.

Wildcats head coach Bill Snyder certainly appreciates Thomas' contributions, and the way he goes about them. "He's a very good young person, very conscientious," Snyder said. "He's a hard worker. He obviously has some physical capabilities. He gives us kind of a multi-purpose dimension. I like that he's a pretty physical running back. I mean, he has reasonably good size."

The 6-foot-2, 227-pound Thomas, a transfer from Northwest Mississippi Community College, also "has a major motor that kind of keeps him going."

And going. And going. And going.

Through 10 games – not counting Kansas State's Nov. 14 showdown with Missouri – Thomas led the Big 12 in rushing attempts (205) and yards (1,087). The undisputed focal point of the Wildcats' offense, he also had 19 receptions for 205 yards.

What's more, Thomas takes direct snaps in K-State's wildcat formation.

"He stays on his feet well," Snyder said. "He's gotten even better as the season's progressed. Some of that comes from understanding the system a little bit better. Some of it comes from experience. And some of it comes from the daily practice routine."

The native of Hilliard, Fla., signed with



DANIEL THOMAS

Kansas State in 2008 but didn't arrive on campus until this past August. He quickly had to learn what Snyder describes as a "large" playbook. But there were other adjustments to be made.

"Part of it is the social development, as he relates to young people in the program," Snyder said. "But he's a very humble young person. I think when you first enter a program, humility is a major asset."

Thomas, rated a 4-star prospect by Rivals.com and the No. 35 junior-college prospect in the nation, has played well despite a nagging shoulder injury.

NOTES

► Kansas State dropped a 66-14 decision Oct. 10 at Texas Tech but rebounded to win three of its next four games. "It was a matter of learning lessons from that ballgame and figuring out what we could do to get ourselves better, which would have been the case regardless of the outcome of that

particular game," said Snyder, who praises his team's resilience.

► Although it's in the thick of the Big 12 North title chase, Snyder recently described his team as being a "rag-tag outfit." He was mostly referring to the Wildcats' inconsistency in games.

KANSAS STATE QUICK FACTS

Head coach: Bill Snyder, 18th season, 136-68-1, all at Kansas State
Career vs. Nebraska: 5-12
Series: NU leads, 76-15-2
at Lincoln: NU leads, 41-8-0
at Manhattan: NU leads, 15-4-0
Note: Nebraska won 29 straight from 1969 through 1997. Kansas State was 5-2 against Nebraska from 1998-2004, before Nebraska's current 4-game win streak.

2009 SCHEDULE

9/5 Massachusetts, W, 21-17
 9/12 at Louisiana-Lafayette, L, 15-17
 9/19 at UCLA, L, 9-23
 9/26 Tennessee Tech, W, 49-7
 10/3 at Iowa State, W, 24-23
 10/10 at Texas Tech, L, 14-66
 10/17 Texas A&M, W, 62-14
 10/24 Colorado, W, 20-6
 10/31 at Oklahoma, L, 30-42
 11/7 Kansas, W, 17-10
 11/14 Missouri, 11:30am
 11/21 at Nebraska, 6:45pm

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Key Return

When quarterback Todd Reesing connected with wide receiver Dezmon Briscoe for a 21-yard

touchdown pass with 7:34 to play, it staked Kansas to its first lead against Nebraska at 17-16 and appeared to give all the momentum to the Jayhawks.

That's when Nebraska's Niles Paul stepped in. After Kansas' score, Paul returned the ensuing kickoff 44 yards and a 5-yard offsides penalty against the Jayhawks gave Nebraska possession at the KU 31-yard line.

"That was a big play in the football game – to answer right back quickly," Nebraska coach Bo Pelini said of Paul's kickoff return and the scoring drive that followed, which helped the Huskers to a 31-17 victory. "That stadium was all juiced up and we kind of got the momentum back."

Paul said he was simply looking to make a play.

"They tried to pooch it and I went up and got it – that's my job," Paul said. "I just had great blocking out there. Those guys blocked hard for me and they gave me a lane and I just took it."

After Paul's big return, a Kansas facemask penalty kept the Huskers' drive alive and I-back Roy Helu Jr. put NU back in front 22-17 on a 20-yard



PHOTO BY AARON BABCOCK

scoring run with 6:19 to play. Nebraska then converted a two-point conversion attempt as quarterback Zac Lee scrambled to his right before finding Paul in the end zone to give the Huskers a 24-17 lead.

Paul finished with a career-high 244 all-purpose yards. The total battered his previous career best of 208 yard all-purpose yards against Iowa State on Oct. 24 and was ninth-best on Nebraska's single-game charts.

Offensively, Paul had a career-high

154 receiving yards on four catches, including grabs of 35, 37, 37 and 45 yards. The junior's receiving total was the sixth-most for a single game in school history and the most since Maurice Purify had 158 receiving yards at Kansas in 2007.

"I just got the opportunity to make plays," Paul said. "I've been saying it all year, if you give me the opportunity, I'm going to do my best to make plays." **N**

— by Terry Douglass



PHOTO BY SCOTT BRUHN

STARTING AGAIN

After watching from the sideline as true freshman **CODY GREEN** started the previous two games at quarterback, **ZAC LEE** enjoyed a successful return to the starting lineup during Nebraska's 31-17 victory at Kansas.

Making his first start since a 9-7 home loss to Iowa State on Oct. 24, Lee was 13-of-21 passing for 196 yards and no interceptions. The junior also rushed nine times for a career-high 53 yards, including a 32-yard run in the second quarter.

"I thought Zac played a damn good football game," Nebraska coach **BO PELINI** said. "He was a leader. He gutted it up when he needed to. I thought he made good decisions, for the most part.

"There were a couple of plays I think he'd want back where he missed a couple

of guys, but overall, I thought it was a solid performance by Zac."

Lee, who was inserted back into the lineup early in the second quarter of the Oklahoma game and has remained under center ever since, said the win over Kansas was a satisfying one.

"Considering the last six weeks, it feels good," Lee said. "It feels good to do this as a team, though, because it wasn't just me going through this little storm we've had. It has been the entire offense and it has been the staff.

"I might have been kind of the front man for it at times, but we've all been through it."

A 'TEAM VICTORY'

While Nebraska's defensive unit had shouldered much of the load in the

Huskers' previous two wins over Baylor and Oklahoma, NU coach **BO PELINI** called the triumph over the Jayhawks "a good team victory."

One week after gaining just 180 total yards in a 10-3 home win over Oklahoma, Nebraska racked up 410 total yards against the Jayhawks. Meanwhile, the Huskers' defense, which had a string of 11 consecutive quarters without allowing a TD snapped against the Jayhawks, yielded nearly seven points above their season average.

"Every game is going to be different and you're going to have different things that are going to have to happen for you to win," Pelini said. "Last week, we found a way and we won on defense. This week, we needed a good combination of the two."



PHOTO BY SCOTT BRUHN

QUICKLY

NOTEWORTHY

► Nebraska's game captains against Kansas were junior tight end **MIKE MCNEILL**, senior linebacker **PHILLIP DILLARD**, senior defensive end **DAVID HARVEY** and junior linebacker **THOMAS GROVE**.

► The Huskers recorded their fourth consecutive Big 12 Conference road victory in the win at Kansas. The last time Nebraska won four straight Big 12 road games was from 1999-2000

► **ALEX HENERY** made three field goals and two point-after kicks to score 11 points against the Jayhawks. The junior place kicker is now seventh on Nebraska's all-time scoring list and is 17 points from cracking the top five.

GOIN' DEEP

Badly in need of an offensive spark, Nebraska found one in wide receiver **NILES PAUL** against Kansas. The junior wide receiver caught four passes for 154 yards, coming up with a 35-yard reception from quarterback **ZAC LEE** on the Huskers' first play from scrimmage.

"We just saw some things that we could take advantage of in the defense (and) get behind them a little bit," Lee said. "Really, we just let our receivers go and make big plays – let them go up and get the ball over their guys."

The theme continued as Paul followed with receptions of 37, 37 and 45 yards.

"Sometimes the corners play up and sometimes they play off," Paul said. "They came up and challenged us and it was between us and them."

NEVER GIVE UP

Perhaps lost in the shuffle of Nebraska's comeback win against Kansas was a key takeaway forced by the Huskers early in the second half that potentially resulted in a 10-point swing.

With the score tied 10-10, Kansas quarterback **TODD REESING** completed a pass to wide receiver **KERRY MEIER** inside the Huskers' 10. However, Nebraska cornerback **DEJON GOMES** punched the ball out of Meier's grasp from behind and safety **MATT O'HANLON** recovered the fumble at the NU 4.

"I was just instinct, mostly," Gomes said. "The coaches always tell us that the play is never over until it's over. I saw a little space between his body and his arm and I just tried to reach in there and make a play."

Nebraska converted the turnover into points, driving 79 yards on 13 plays in 7:15 for a 34-yard Alex Henery field goal, taking a 13-10 lead with 3:42 left in the third quarter.

"That was just a huge play," O'Hanlon

said. "Dejon may have gotten beat a little on the catch, but he never gave up on the play and turned it into a big play for us."

FINE FINISH

After taking a 24-17 lead, Nebraska's defense forced Kansas to go three and out on its next possession. That's when the Huskers used their offense to put the game on ice, driving 74 yards in 10 plays – all on the ground with **ROY HELU JR.** and **DONTRAYEVIOUS ROBINSON** – and consumed 4:46 to go ahead by 14 points when Helu dove into the end zone to complete a 14-yard TD run with 29 seconds left.

"That's the way you finish," Nebraska coach **BO PELINI** said. "That's the way you come out and you're able to put the game away and finish on the field on offense and put the ball in the end zone in that situation."

"They knew what we were going to do -- we were going to run the football -- and we were able to will it down the field and put it in the end zone and put the game away."

PHOTO BY AARON BABCOCK



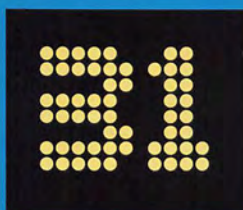
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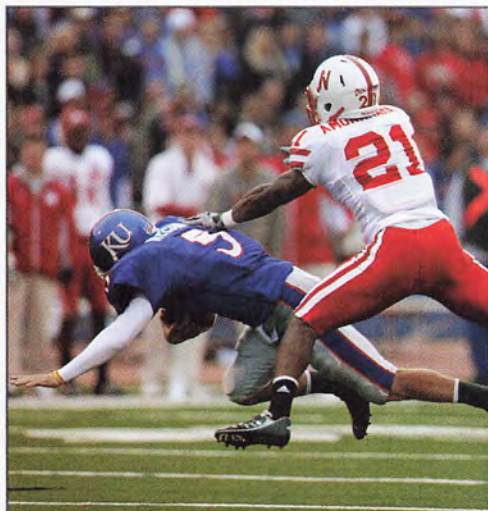
NEBRASKA



KANSAS



Left: Bo Pelini prepares to lead the Huskers on the field before the game. (PHOTO BY SCOTT BRUHN) **Middle left:** QBs Cody Green and Zac Lee exchange high fives before the game. (BRUHN) **Middle:** Prince Amukamara sacks Todd Reesing. (BRUHN) **Below:** Niles Paul escapes a pass interference call. (AARON BABCOCK) **Bottom:** Matt O'Hanlon tackles wide receiver Dezmon Briscoe. (AARON BABCOCK)



REPORT CARD

RUSHING:

A

The Cornhuskers averaged 5.1 yards per carry, and when they needed to finish the job, they did, rushing for 97 yards on 16 carries in the decisive fourth quarter. **ROY HELU, JR.** rushed for more than 100 yards for the fourth time this season, and quarterback **ZAC LEE** ran for a career-high 53 yards.

PASSING:

A

ZAC LEE was efficient, not flashy, completing 13-of-21 for 196 yards. The line protected him; he was sacked only once. And **NILES PAUL** had a career day receiving, with 154 yards on four catches. Tight end **MIKE MCNEILL** also got into the act, with four receptions.

RUSHING DEFENSE:

A-

Kansas managed one long run, a 17-yarder by quarterback Todd Reesing. The Jayhawks did mount a 13-play, 80-yard drive for their first touchdown, with the running of **TOBEN OPURUM** an important part. The 6-foot-2, 235-pound freshman from Plano, Texas, carried six times during the drive and converted fourth-and-1 situations twice.

PASSING DEFENSE:

B-

TODD REESING completed only 19-of-41 passes but missed some open receivers. **KERRY MEIER** made some big plays, catching 10 passes for 127 yards. But **DEJON GOMES** forced a fumble on one of Meier's catches, and **MATT O'HANLON** recovered. Reesing was sacked only once.

KICKING/SPECIAL TEAMS:

A

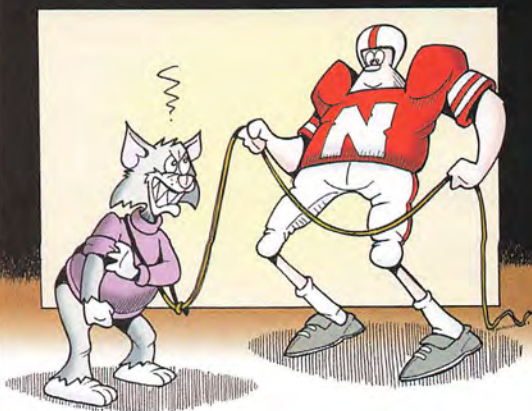
TIM MARLOWE got the Cornhuskers off to a good start by returning the opening kickoff 40 yards. And **NILES PAUL** responded after Kansas took a 17-16 with a 44-yard kickoff return. Alex Henery was automatic, as usual, hitting three-of-three field goal attempts.

FAN OF THE GAME



THE PAUL FELL PREDICTION

NEBRASKA vs. **KANSAS STATE**



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NOVEMBER 21, 2009
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QUICK PICKS



Aaron Babcock
(53-25/6-2)



Mike Babcock
(55-23/7-1)



Sean Callahan
(50-28/6-2)



John Talman
(50-28/6-2)



Matt Davison
(56-22/8-0)

(Season/Last Week)

Kansas State at Nebraska	NU 24-10	NU 17-7	NU 31-10	NU 28-21	NU 24-10
Colorado at Oklahoma State	OSU 42-7	OSU 38-14	OSU 34-17	OSU 38-21	OSU 37-13
Kansas at Texas	UT 42-10	UT 42-17	UT 41-17	UT 38-17	UT 41-21
Oklahoma at Texas Tech	OU 35-28	TT 21-20	OU 27-16	OU 38-31	OU 27-24
Iowa State at Missouri	MU 35-20	MU 27-15	MU 38-20	MU 27-21	MU 34-21
Baylor at Texas A&M	A&M 17-14	A&M 35-31	A&M 31-21	A&M 23-17	A&M 31-24
Oregon at Arizona	OU 35-21	UA 28-27	OU 45-34	OU 41-39	OU 34-27
LSU at Mississippi	LSU 14-10	LSU 13-10	UM 27-23	LSU 28-27	UM 17-14

SUMMARY

SCORING

Nov. 14, 2009
Memorial Stadium • Lawrence, Kan.
Attendance: 51,525

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Tot
Nebraska	7	3	3	18	31
Kansas	0	10	0	7	17

	NU	KU
First Quarter		
NU Helu Jr. TD FUMB (Henery Kick) 12:05 Drive: 6 plays 58 yds 2:55	7	0
Second Quarter		
NU Henery 25-yard Field Goal 10:47 Drive: 6 plays 70 yds 1:56	10	0
KU Reesing 5-yard Run (Branstetter Kick) 04:58 Drive: 13 plays 80 yds 5:49	10	7
KU Branstetter 33-yard Field Goal 00:00 Drive: 12 plays 64 yds 3:37	10	10
Third Quarter		
NU Henery 34-yard Field Goal 03:42 Drive: 13 plays 79 yds 7:15	13	10
Fourth Quarter		
NU Henery 38-yard Field Goal 11:53 Drive: 13 plays 51 yds 5:50	16	10
KU Briscoe Pass from Reesing 21-yards (Branstetter Kick) 07:34 Drive: 10 plays 89 yds 4:11	16	17
NU Helu Jr. 20-yard Run (Paul Pass Good) 06:19 Drive: 4 plays 31 yds 1:04	24	17
NU Helu Jr. 14-yard Run (Henery Kick) 00:29 Drive: 10 plays 74 yds 4:46	31	17

TEAM STATS

	NU	KU
Total First Downs	18	21
Rushing	10	8
Passing	6	11
Penalty	2	2
Rushing Attempts	42	29
Yards Gained Rushing	233	113
Yards Lost Rushing	19	14
Net Yards Rushing	214	99
Net Yards Passing	196	236
Passes Attempted	21	41
Passes Completed	13	19
Had Intercepted	0	0
Percent Completion	61.9%	46.3%
Yards per Attempt	9.3	5.8
Yards per Completion	15.1	12.4
Total Offensive Plays	63	70
Total Net Yards	410	335
Avg. Gain Per Play	6.5	4.8
Fumbles: No-Lost	1-0	1-1
Penalties: No-Yards	5-55	4-50
Punts: No-Yards	4-155	6-269
Avg. Per Punt	38.8	44.8
Avg. Net Punt	38.2	41.8
Punt Returns: No-Yards	2-18	1-2
Kickoff Returns: No-Yards	3-112	6-105
Interception Returns: No-Yards	0-0	0-0
Fumble Returns: No-Yards	0-0	0-0
Miscellaneous Yards	0	0
Possession Time	31:29	28:31
Third-Down Conversions	7-16	6-16
Percentage	43.8%	37.5%
Fourth-Down Conversions	0-0	2-2
Percentage	0.0%	100.0%
Sacks By: No-Yards	1-9	1-8

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

NEBRASKA

Rushing	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Helu Jr.	28	162	6	156	5.6	3	30
Lee	9	61	8	53	5.9	0	32
Robinson	4	10	0	10	2.5	0	5
TEAM	1	0	5	-5	-5.0	0	0
Total	42	233	19	214	5.1	3	32

Passing	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
Lee	21	13	61.9	0	196	0	45
Total	21	13	61.9	0	196	0	45

Receiving	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Paul	4	154	0	45
McNeill	4	27	0	10
Kinnie	1	8	0	8
Cooper	3	5	0	7
Young	1	2	0	2
Total	13	196	0	45

Punt Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Paul	2	18	0	10
Total	2	18	0	10

Kick Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Paul	2	72	0	44
Marlowe	1	40	0	40
Total	3	112	0	44

Punting	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In 20
Henery	4	38.8	52	0	1	0	1	1
Total	4	38.8	52	0	1	0	1	1

Field Goals	Made	Att	Lg	Blkd
Henery	3	3	38	0
Total	3	3	38	0

Defense	Tac	Ast	Tot	TFL	Sac	PD	FF	FR
Gomes	5	3	8	0.5-3	0-0	2	1	0
Dillard	2	4	6	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Asante	2	3	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Dennard	5	0	5	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Turner	3	2	5	2-2	0-0	0	0	0
Allen	1	3	4	0.5-2	0-0	0	0	0
Amukamara	4	0	4	1-9	1-9	1	0	0
Hagg	4	0	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Crick	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Meredith	2	1	3	1-3	0-0	0	0	0
Suh	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Martin	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
O'Hanlon	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	1
Stoddard	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
May	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Smith	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Thorell	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0

Interception Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Total	0	0	0	0

KANSAS

Rushing	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Opurum	15	44	1	43	2.9	0	6
Reesing	9	54	12	42	4.7	1	17
Sharp	3	10	0	10	3.3	0	4
Pick	1	5	0	5	5.0	0	5
Briscoe	1	0	1	-1	-1.0	0	0
Total	29	113	14	99	3.4	1	17

Passing	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
Reesing	41	19	46.3	0	236	1	28
Total	41	19	46.3	0	236	1	28

Receiving	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Meier	10	127	0	21
Briscoe	4	77	1	28
Wilson	2	24	0	15
Biere	1	9	0	9
Sharp	1	4	0	4
Opurum	1	-5	0	0
Total	19	236	1	28

Punt Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
McDougald	1	2	0	2
Total	1	2	0	2

Kick Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
McDougald	4	65	0	20
Stuckey	2	39	0	23
Wilson	0	1	0	1
Total	6	105	0	23

Punting	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In 20
Rojas	6	44.8	57	0	0	0	2	2
Total	6	44.8	57	0	0	0	2	2

Field Goals	Made	Att	Lg	Blkd
Branstetter	1	1	33	0
Total	1	1	33	0

Defense	Tac	Ast	Tot	TFL	Sac	PD	FF	FR
Tharp	6	7	13	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Stuckey	8	3	11	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Harris	4	6	10	1.5-3	0-0	0	0	0
Dudley	3	6	9	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Smith	3	5	8	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Onyegbule	1	4	5	1.5-8	1-8	0	0	0
Thornton	4	1	5	0-0	0-0	2	0	0
Laptad	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Blakesley	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Davis	2	0	2	1-2	0-0	0	0	0
Greene	1	0	1	1-3	0-0	0	0	0
Quigley	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Springer	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	1	1	0
Wheeler	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Williams	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Wright	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0

Interception Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Total	0	0	0	0



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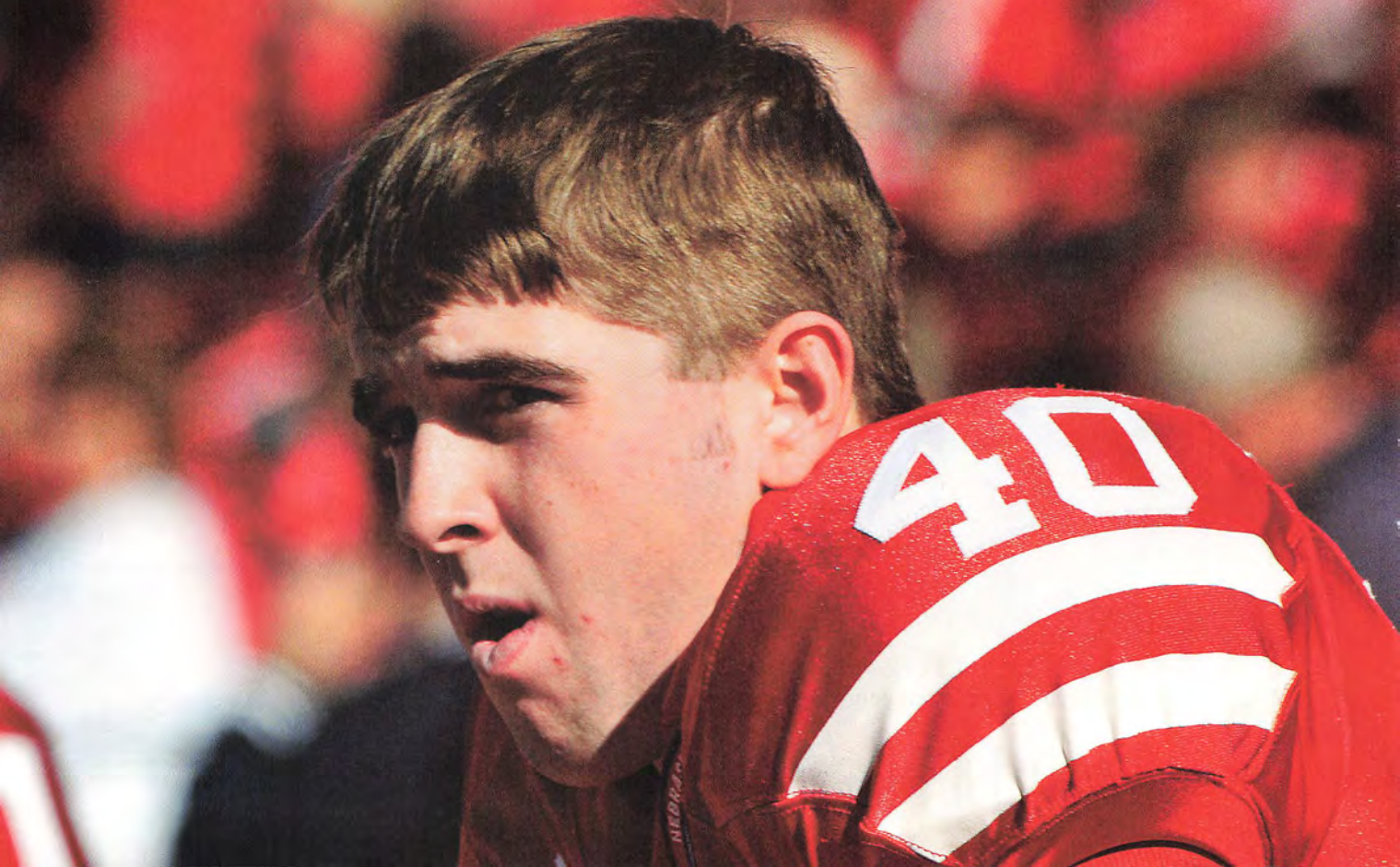


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After taking a third hard hit that day, **Blake Lawrence** thought "You go tell the trainers today's your **last day of practice**, today's your **last day of football**. Today's the last day you wear pads, you wear a helmet. Today's the last day you do anything."

by Brian Rosenthal



Blake Lawrence

expected an intense, physical practice. Nebraska had just lost to Texas Tech at home, the offense was struggling and coaches wanted to see pads popping.

There were times Lawrence, who'd suffered his third career concussion in the spring, would sit out certain drills because of a higher risk of a head injury. This

to be a rough go,' " Lawrence said. "He's a walk-on who just runs and runs and runs and works his butt off."

But Lawrence, a 6-foot-3, 225-pound linebacker from Kansas City, Kan., wasn't going to back away from the challenge.

"Coach (Mike) Ekeler wants to see a big pop, a big hit," Lawrence said. "I'm

frustrated with the situation and didn't want to take any extreme measures and say, 'I'm done.' Because I wasn't ready to do that."

Lawrence continued with practice. Nebraska was running live plays when Lawrence collided with a running back and hit the same spot on his head, the left frontal lobe.

"Once again, right after I hit it, I just stopped."



Turns out the pulling tackle on the play messed up. So coaches ordered the play run again.

"And this tackle's mad because he has to run the play again, and I'm mad because I just made a great hit on a play," Lawrence said. "The tackle pulls around, and I come around and we just collide heads again on the very next play."

In the same practice, Lawrence had taken three hits with the same high

velocity on the same spot of his head.

"I stared at the ground about 10 yards in front of me because that's really all I could focus on," he said. "Then I started playing out the situation in my head, over and over. 'You go tell the trainers today's your last day of practice, today's your last day of football. Today's the last day you wear pads, you wear a helmet. Today's the last day you do anything.'"

Monday wasn't going to be one of those times.

Lawrence lined up for a tackling drill that began practice. He was second in line. He looked across at the opposing group. He noticed Kevin Thomsen, a 6-foot-2, 235-pound fullback from Elkhorn, was second in line.

"And I'm like, 'Oh, man, this is going

running full speed, he's running full speed, and I just kind of lower the boom. He lowers his head, and his head knocks mine.

"Right there, I kind of just shoved him and just stood there."

Lawrence immediately feared the worst.

"I felt woozy," he said, "but I was real

Yet Lawrence couldn't bring himself to do that. Not yet.

Mathew May was the first teammate to recognize the normally jovial, goofy Lawrence wasn't himself.

"He was like, 'Are you all right? Is your head OK?' And I'm like, 'I'm OK, I'm just a little out of it, not feeling very well.' He's like, 'You should tell someone.' I said, 'Mat, you know what it means if I tell someone.' He's like, 'It doesn't matter. If you don't tell someone and you get another one tomorrow, it could be even worse.'

"That right there helped me a lot. Someone

"I always wanted to save the last one for something big. Not a tackling drill on a Monday."

Lawrence on what he told his father.

else realized that it's OK that this happened; your safety is more important than you trying to be a tough guy and stick it out another day or another week."

Lawrence went to the side of the practice field by himself, took a knee and tried to collect his thoughts. Practice finished, Lawrence showered and changed, left the locker room and took a left turn into head football trainer Mark Mayer's office.

"I said, 'Mark, something happened today.' He looked at me immediately and said, 'You had another concussion, didn't you.' I said, 'I don't know, I just think



something happened today.'

Lawrence saw a doctor who assessed his symptoms and determined that Lawrence did indeed suffer another concussion, his fourth in 18 months.

Lawrence knew he couldn't risk a fifth.

"I wanted 85,000 people to say, 'That was his last play.' That was one of the hardest things for me," he said. "I called my dad and I said, 'Dad, I didn't even know it was my last day, it was my last day of football.' I always wanted to save the last one for something big. Not a tackling drill on a Monday."

Lawrence is remaining on Nebraska's staff as a volunteer coach. He's still watching film, learning game plans and attending practices, only without a helmet and shoulder pads.

He's also spending time educating himself and others on the dangers and long-lasting effects of concussions.

"I read a story that said that a lot of the focus on concussions down the line and how it affects your brain has been on NFL players," Lawrence said. "But more recently there was a player who had never played in college, just high school football, that when he died, they did a study on his brain and he had some serious brain damage."

"I know there are a lot of players out there who've sustained more concussions than me and may not realize it. I think the awareness of the topic is increasing. There's a lot more research being done, a lot more attention brought to concussions and

protecting brain injuries."

Lawrence also wants to share his experiences with others, whether it

work on his MBA and remain with the team on scholarship in 2010. He still wants to walk on the field with his



be high school players or teammates.

"I'm kind of the concussion guru on our team right now," he said. "Any time some-one's dinged up, they come over and see me. Just recently on the team there was a player who had a concussion and came and talked to me first. I told him, 'This is what you're looking at, here's why this is happening and here's what you should do about it.'"

A junior with a 3.9 GPA, Lawrence will graduate in December with a marketing degree. He'll then begin



teammates on Senior Day.

"I don't care how many tackles I had or how many games I played," Lawrence said. "I was able to wear a uniform and be a Husker." **N**

Huskers in race for 5-star defensive end

BY SEAN STEVENS

Headed into the Oklahoma game, Nebraska's 2010 recruiting class stood at 11 verbal commitments. After the rousing 10-3 victory over the Sooners, that list had grown to 14 with the addition of defensive tackle **JAY GUY**, defensive back **JOSHUA MITCHELL** and defensive end **TOBI OKUYEMI**.

Guy, a 6-foot-1, 300-pound run-stopper from Aldine, Texas, Eisenhower, committed to California last February. By July, however, he was talking about taking official visits to other schools.

"I'm still very committed to Cal but my parents feel that I owe it to myself to check out some other schools," he said at the time.

As autumn rolled around, he contemplated visits to a number of schools, but in the end the 3-star prospect only took trips to Cal and UCLA before his trip to Lincoln. His time with the NU program was enough to make up his mind.

"Yeah, I committed," Guy said. "You know the coaches were one (reason)...the fans though and what they put into the stadium. That team is powerful; it's the whole school. The people really make the school. I was surprised everybody knew my name."

The play of the Blackshirts during the victory over Oklahoma was also a key factor in Guy's decision.

"It was the scheme, the opportunity open for someone like me. It's sick how good they played yesterday. It was everything though - the fans, coaches, all that wrapped together."

As a December graduate, Guy will start college in January and go through spring practice with the Huskers. Along with Cal



and UCLA, Guy also counted Arizona, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri and Texas A&M among his 20-plus offers.

Mitchell is a 5-11, 165-pound cornerback prospect from Corona, Calif., Eleanor Roosevelt. Coming into the trip he was practically gushing about the Blackshirts' performance this season.

"As a defensive player it makes you feel like that's a place you have to go," he said. "It starts with their defensive line and works its way out. They have a great core. I'm all about being part of a good defense."

He visited Lincoln along with three of his high school teammates, but was the only one to make his commitment thus far.

"After getting up here, seeing the facilities, meeting the people, fans, teammates, the coaches - everybody - I just thought it was a perfect place for me to play football," Mitchell said.

Mitchell, a 3-star prospect according to Rivals, has been considered a strong lean to Nebraska as far back as August. He also had offers from Colorado State, UTEP and Washington State.

His older brother Immanuel is a freshman defensive back at Colorado

State, and Joshua officially visited the Rams' Fort Collins, Colorado, campus in mid-October.

"The facilities were good and the people were great; everybody out there was pretty amazing. It was cold when I was there, 18 degrees. But it was still a lot of fun," he said.

He also had a trip to UTEP scheduled for Thanksgiving weekend, but it appears that visit will not happen with his commitment to Nebraska.

"This is it for me, I'm done," he said.

As a junior, Mitchell recorded 74 tackles and one interception. Through eight games this season he has 15 tackles (10 solo), 4 pass break-ups and 5 interceptions. Three of those interceptions have been returned for touchdowns, including one from 65 yards out.

The Oklahoma trip was the third visit to Lincoln for Okuyemi, a 6-3 and 250-pound defensive end from Plymouth, Minn., Wayzata, following trips for NU's junior day and spring game.

"Well, I mean, from day one, when I first received my offer from the University of Nebraska a while back, I was really excited about it with the history and

excellent football,” Okuyemi said. “The next thing was I went to their spring game; I saw all these people going to a scrimmage. That gave me a great feeling about it and meeting all the coaches, coach (John) Papuchis and coach (Barney) Cotton.

“They’re great guys, and they really wanted me there. They showed me everything they had to offer and I liked it.”

The 3-star prospect made up his mind early Sunday morning on his visit. He spoke to his father, who accompanied him on the visit, before making his decision known to the Husker coaches.

“I think it was after we ate breakfast,” Okuyemi said. “I told him, I’m ready to commit and he said ‘O.K., call Mom first.’ She was glad and happy for me. She gave me her blessing. So we went to (Pelini’s) office to talk and that’s when it went down. He asked me, ‘How do you feel?’ and I said, ‘I want to be a Cornhusker.’ “

Okuyemi was being pursued by schools such as Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Tennessee and Wisconsin.

NEBRASKA’S OFFICIAL VISITS

NAME	POS.	HT	WT	DATE	COMMIT
Tyler Evans	ATH	6-2	180	11/21	Nebraska
Owamagbe Odighizuwa	DE	6-3	234	11/21	
Damon Williams	DT	6-4	300	11/21	
Corey Cooper	DB	6-2	203	11/6	Illinois
Jay Guy	DT	6-1	300	11/7	Nebraska
Austin Hill	WR	6-3	192	11/7	
Derrick Malone	DB	5-11	165	11/7	
Joshua Mitchell	DB	5-11	165	11/7	Nebraska
Harold Mobley	ATH	6-4	225	11/7	
Tobi Okuyemi	DE	6-3	250	11/7	Nebraska
Tyler Slavin	WR	6-2	182	11/7	
Giovanni Bernard	RB	5-9	198	10/24	Notre Dame
Curtis Carter	ATH	5-10	161	10/17	Nebraska
Quincy Enunwa	WR	6-2	200	10/17	Nebraska
Andre Hal	DB	6-0	170	10/17	Vanderbilt
Derron Smith	DB	5-11	173	10/17	
Ciante Evans	DB	5-11	170	9/26	Nebraska
Chase Harper	TE	6-6	248	9/26	
Joshua Reese	WR	6-1	182	9/26	
Chase Rome	DE	6-3	290	9/26	Nebraska
Bud Sasser	WR	6-3	200	9/26	
Bobby Swigert	WR	6-1	175	9/26	Boston College
Colin Tanigawa	OL	6-3	286	9/26	Washington
Willis Wright	WR	6-2	185	9/26	
Harvey Jackson	DB	6-2	185	9/5	Nebraska
Tejay Johnson	ATH	6-2	190	9/5	
Mike Moudy	OL	6-7	291	9/5	Nebraska
Donovan Vestal	DE	6-5	240	9/5	Nebraska



IN STATE SPOTLIGHT

BY SEAN CALLAHAN

Eight-man football Division I prospects are a rarity in the state of Nebraska, but at 6-foot-5 and 230 pounds Sterling defensive end **ZACH LEMPKA** has the frame to be a player at the next level. Huskers Illustrated caught up with Lempka in this week’s in-state recruiting spotlight.

CALLAHAN: What’s the strangest thing about playing eight-man football compared to 11-man football?

LEMPKA: I would say the kids are probably not quite the size I am. Eight-man is a fast-paced game, and if you don’t have a good defense you probably won’t win very many games because you can score pretty easy.

CALLAHAN: Your mom is Dean Steinkuhler’s sister. With that said, how big is football in your family?

LEMPKA: It’s pretty intense on Saturdays. There’s a lot of yelling and cheering and stuff like that.

CALLAHAN: Growing up in Nebraska, what’s your favorite Husker memory?

LEMPKA: Probably the play in the Oklahoma game with Eric Crouch and Mike Stuntz. Oklahoma tried one against us earlier in the game and we did it right back to them. We got it to work and they didn’t.

CALLAHAN: If somebody was coming to Sterling, where would you take them for a good time?

LEMPKA: I would probably take them out to fish or hunt. We have some good ponds around here. I like to fish. I caught a 9-pound wiper in Kansas before.

CALLAHAN: Facebook, MySpace or Twitter?

LEMPKA: I’m a Facebook guy. I’m on there probably once or twice a day.

CALLAHAN: What’s your favorite thing or place to eat?

LEMPKA: I would probably see a cheeseburger and fries right from our local bar here in Sterling called the Corner Bar. It’s probably not too healthy for you, but it tastes pretty good.

CALLAHAN: If you could have dinner with any three famous people, who would they be and why?

LEMPKA: Michael Jordan, because I’m a big Chicago Bulls fan. Then I would say Denzel Washington, because he’s one of my favorite actors. I’m a big Denzel guy. I like his movies. My favorite is “Remember the Titans.” The last guy would probably be Nicolas Cage, because I really like his movies, too.

Recruiting Notebook

Four recruits visit from same school

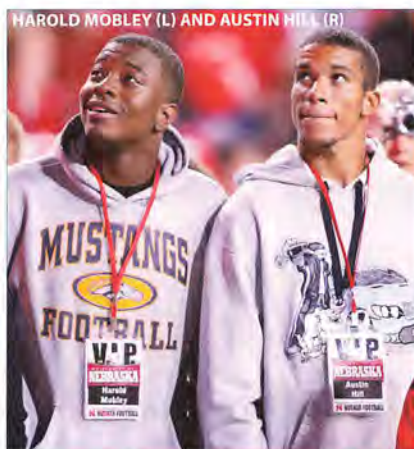
by Mike Matya

Four recruits from Corona, Calif., Eleanor Roosevelt High School traveled to Nebraska for official visits last weekend. One of them, cornerback **JOSHUA MITCHELL**, decided to give his verbal pledge to play for the Cornhuskers.

The other three have other schools they want to see before making a decision.

HAROLD MOBLEY, a 6-foot-4 and 225-pound athlete who could project to either defensive end or tight end in college, had his head turned by Big Red nation.

"It was good; it was really good," Mobley said. "The game was amazing. Everything was just amazing. Just the way the fans were and how loud the fans get. I couldn't hear myself think, it was so loud."



Though he liked everything he saw and experienced, Mobley said that he wasn't personally ready to commit.

"No, not yet," Mobley explained. "It's coming down to Nebraska, Colorado and UCLA. UCLA said that they're probably coming down with an offer. They told me not to commit anywhere yet."

If the Bruins should come through with

an offer, Mobley said it might be too little, too late.

"I'm really not so sure because I really like Nebraska. My visit was a '10.' Everything went great," he said.

TYLER SLAVIN, a 6-2, 185-pound receiver recruit, said he very much enjoyed the experience in Lincoln as well.

"It was very good, just the whole atmosphere," Slavin said. "And the facilities were wonderful. I've never seen anything like it."

When he met with Husker head coach **BO PELINI** on Sunday, Pelini stressed to Slavin that he should not make a precipitous decision.

"Coach Pelini... just talked about when I thought I would make my decision, and he told me that when a place is right for me I'd know it," Slavin said.

Prior to his official to Nebraska, Slavin had taken official visits to Arizona and Colorado. He also plans to see Washington and Stanford before committing.

The last of Nebraska's four visitors from Roosevelt was 6-3 and 192-pound receiver prospect **AUSTIN HILL**. Hill, like Mobley and Slavin, rated his visit a '10' overall.

"It was pretty awesome," Hill said.

Hill said he will take visits to Arizona and Northwestern before making his final choice.

The Husker coaches were "pretty relaxed," said Hill. "They told me to take my time, and if I was thinking about a commitment, I could tell them whenever I decided." **N**

2010 Nebraska Commitment List (16)

Name (Rivals.com ranking)	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown (School)
Walker Ashburn ★★ ★★	DE	6-3	245	River Ridge, La. (John Curtis)
Curtis Carter ★★ ★★	ATH	5-10	161	Stonewall, La. (North De Soto)
Jake Cotton	ATH	6-7	265	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
Quincy Enunwa	WR	6-2	200	Moreno Valley, Calif. (Rancho Verde)
Ciante Evans ★★ ★★	CB	5-11	170	Arlington, Texas (Juan Seguin)
Tyler Evans ★★	ATH	6-2	180	Waverly, Neb. (Waverly)
Tyler Gabbert ★★ ★★	QB	6-0	190	Ballwin, Mo. (Parkway West)
Jay Guy ★★ ★★	DT	6-1	300	Aldine, Texas (Eisenhower)
Chase Harper ★★ ★★	TE	6-6	248	Carsicana, Texas (Navarro JC)
Harvey Jackson ★★ ★★	DB	6-2	185	Missouri City, Texas (Hightower)
Joshua Mitchell ★★ ★★	DB	5-11	165	Corona, Calif. (Eleanor Roosevelt)
Mike Moudy ★★ ★★	OL	6-7	291	Castle Rock, Colo. (Douglas County)
Tobi Okuyemi ★★ ★★	DE	6-3	250	Plymouth, Minn. (Wayzata)
Andrew Rodriguez ★★ ★★	OT	6-6	300	Aurora, Neb. (Aurora)
Chase Rome ★★ ★★	DE	6-3	290	Columbia, Mo. (Rock Bridge)
Donovan Vestal ★★ ★★	DE	6-5	240	Arlington, Texas (Bowie)

2011 Nebraska Commitment List (2)

Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown (School)
Tyler Moore	OL	6-6	290	Clearwater, Fla. (Countryside)
Ryne Reeves	OL	6-3	286	Crete, Neb. (Crete)



DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS

BY JOHN TALMAN
RECRUITING PUBLISHER,
HUSKERSILLUSTRATED.COM

Not too early to look at the 2011 class

IT'S TIME TO START thinking about 2011.

No, I'm not talking about the 2011 season. I mean, we've got the rest of 2009 to look forward to. Not to mention, there is still the entire 2010 season that's a ways away.

I'm talking about recruiting.

The class everybody is watching now, 2010, Nebraska sits at 16 commits and that means that it's inching very close to being full. For the record, I don't think the class gets any bigger than 20 or 21.

That's even pushing it a bit unless some major attrition takes place in the post-season.

So what does this mean? Assuming Nebraska continues to show promise in the final games of the regular season, this is the perfect opportunity to continue building towards an impressive beginning to the 2011 group.

If you're Nebraska, you have to be satisfied with the 2011 start.

The commits for 2011, both offensive linemen, so far are: arguably the top in-state prospect for the 2011 class, Ryne Reeves from Crete, Neb., and arguably one of the top tackles in the country for '11, Clearwater, Fla., Countryside's Tyler Moore.

You've got plenty of options after the commits you already have. So going forward in terms of who may be next as a possible commit: how about San Antonio, Texas, Madison running back Aaron Green, who will be one of the nation's most highly sought-after running

backs? His brother is a true freshman cornerback at Nebraska, and Austin Hill, his cousin, could be a commit for the Huskers in 2010.

That's just the beginning, as I've said in previous articles. The future looks bright for 2011 because you've not only got momentum but also a ton of connections to prospects in a variety of ways. That includes recruits with family members who may live in the state of Nebraska and also legacies.

So why start looking ahead now? I mean, it's too early to be looking at first-semester junior recruits, right?

Well, Nebraska's spots are not just running thin for 2010, but in today's recruiting you have to start fast on the next crop. Yes, like now.

A successful finish to this particular season like last year will only boost the next group, a junior class that is already extremely impressive. By gaining momentum in recruiting with a nice finish this year and building on this successful start for 2011 is a must.

The 2011 class has the potential to be great. It is not just about momentum, or wins, or recruiting prowess. In this age of recruiting, it's about finishing 2010 early and getting the early jump that most top programs get on young talent.

Texas is going to continue to have its junior days just weeks after signing the previous year's class and racking up loads of junior talent before others. Even out-of-state programs in the Big 12 like

Oklahoma and Oklahoma State haul in an early crop of young talent to fast-growing commitment lists.

However, Nebraska has done exceptionally well in getting two top 2011 commits already. Now is the time to keep moving and pushing. This isn't just about quantity with two in November of 2009. It's about the quality they bring.

If the Huskers want to be successful in recruiting, early evaluation and identification of top prospects is a must right now with the juniors out there.

One would have to think getting two top offensive linemen really sets the stage for a top running back like Green or, say, top junior quarterbacks such as Arlington, Texas, Sam Houston product Jamal Turner, who unofficially visited Lincoln for the Oklahoma game.

They would be right.

The time is now for Nebraska as their defense runs through conference opponents and the offense continues to try and integrate young talent. Top sophomores like Moore and Reeves could help pave the way for Nebraska to get an early jump on the top prospects in the country.

It has to start now because frankly, recruiting has changed in the last 20 years.

You have to look ahead to the 2011 and 2012 classes in November of 2009. Why? Because if you're Nebraska, your competition already is. You've got a good start in place. Now is the time to keep it going. **N**

Volleyball

GINA MANCUSO

BY BOB HAMAR

Mancuso gives Huskers a deadly server

Nebraska libero Kayla Banwarth has developed into one of the top passers in the Big 12 Conference, but there is one player she doesn't want to pass.

And she faces that player very day in practice. It's her teammate Gina Mancuso.

"I practiced with Jordan Larson for two years and I'm telling you right now, Gina is ridiculous," Banwarth said. "I don't want to try and pass her serves. It's not something I want to do."

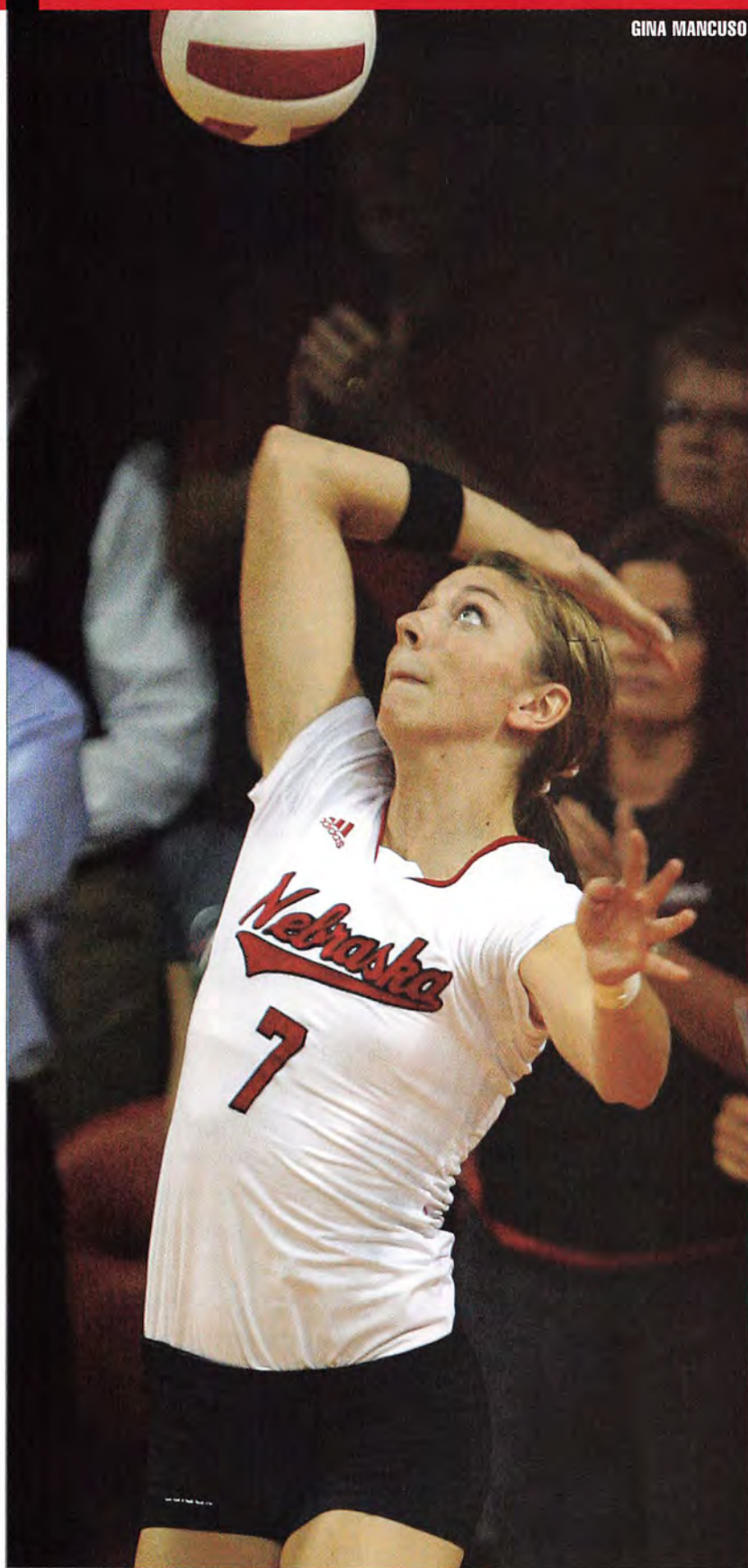
"It just jumps around on you and moves so much that it's just a crapshoot. You're just lucky if you get it up in the air."

Nebraska coach John Cook said Mancuso has a unique serving ability, just like New York Yankees pitcher Mariano Rivera.

"It's like what makes Mariano Rivera's split-fingered fastball so good that no one else can throw," Cook said. "It just has nasty movement to it. It's nothing we can coach. It's just how her hand hits the ball."

But Cook has helped Mancuso develop her serve. He has taught her how to not follow through on her serve. That makes it float over the net and also helps keep it in bounds.

"I never realized that but coach pointing it out in practice, it just makes sense," Mancuso said. "If you just follow through the ball,



there is a better chance of it going out. I wouldn't say it's a major difference, but it helps."

Mancuso said Cook put a mat in front of the servers in practice so they couldn't fall forward when they serve. That's really the only thing Mancuso has changed in her serve since her high school days at Papillion-LaVista (Neb.).

"I really wouldn't say there's much difference," Mancuso said. "The only thing I can say is when you (serve), you don't fall into the ball; you just land. That just causes the ball to float and stay in bounds."

Mancuso started some early this season as an outside hitter in the front row, but her role changed as the season went along. As fellow freshman Hannah Werth took control of that position, Mancuso began playing more in the back row.

Her job now is to serve, play defense and occasionally attack from the back row.

"My role is going in the back row," Mancuso said. "Serving and defense are my main things. At first serving wasn't going very well for me. I had a lot of errors, so mentally I just prepared myself and went through self-talk. I really just tried to focus on that."

Mancuso was a tough server and attacker at Papillion-LaVista where she led the Monarchs to two straight state championships. She had 721 kills as a senior and became the first Nebraska player to be named the Gatorade National Player of the Year.

Mancuso was also named the national player of the year by Volleyball Magazine and was a first-team All-America selection by the American Volleyball Coaches Association.

Now as a freshman she is second on the Nebraska team with .25 ace serves per set. That number has been coming up as the season has progressed.

Mancuso said it wasn't that difficult to

adjust to being a back-row player.

"I honestly would say that it didn't take me that long," Mancuso said. "I do miss swinging in the front row, but this is my role this year and I just have to face it, and I'm trying to do what's best for the team."

Cook is happy with the improvement he's seen from Mancuso this season.

"We'd like to get a little more offense out of her, but her passing numbers are great and her serving numbers are exceptional," Cook said. "For a freshman, that's huge. Defensively, she gets better every week. I think she's growing into that role that we created for her and continues to have a bigger impact on games."

NOVEMBER TO REMEMBER

Cook and his staff came up with a slogan for the stretch run. They're calling it "November to remember."

The coaching staff worked the Huskers very hard coming off their big win at Iowa State on Nov. 7. Cook said he wants the players to know that they can't let up.

"The message being sent is there's no backing off," Cook said. "That's what this 'November to remember' is all about. It's about getting better and heading in hot going into the NCAA Tournament."

BALANCE A KEY

The Huskers put together what Cook said was their best effort of the season in the sweep at Iowa State. They did it with a balanced attack as Kori Cooper, Lindsey Licht and Hannah Werth had nine kills each.

Cook credited setter Sydney Anderson, who was named the Big 12 Offensive Player of the Week, for getting everyone involved in the offense.

"That's what we've been trying to stress, and Sydney did a great job of balancing that," Cook said, "when you look the fact that five starters had eight or

nine kills.

"We don't have somebody who can carry the team so we have to be balanced."

MUELLER COMING ON

Cook said junior outside hitter Tara Mueller finally seemed to be having some fun in the win over the Cyclones. Although her attack percentage of .199 as of Nov. 10 was lower than he'd like, Mueller has played well in all other aspects of the game.

"The thing I keep pointing out to her is her stats are better than last year in every area except attacks," Cook said. "If she just trusts her attack, she'll be playing at a higher level than she was last year. We saw a little of that against Iowa State." **N**

2009 VOLLEYBALL SCHEDULE

Aug. 22	Red/White Scrimmage, 7 p.m.
Aug. 28-29	Runza/AVCA Showcase
Aug. 28	*vs. Michigan, L, 3-0
Aug. 29	*vs. Minnesota, W, 3-2
Sept. 1	Creighton, W, 3-0
Sept. 4-5	at LSU Tournament
Sept. 4	vs. UL-Lafayette, W, 3-0
	at LSU, W, 3-2
Sept. 5	vs. Tulane, W, 3-0
Sept. 10-13	Ameritas Players Challenge
Sept. 10	Virginia, W, 3-0
Sept. 11	BYU, W, 3-1
Sept. 13	^UCLA, L, 3-2
Sept. 16	Texas Tech, W, 3-0
Sept. 19	at Colorado, W, 3-0
Sept. 23	at Texas A&M, L, 3-2
Sept. 30	at Oklahoma, W, 3-0
Oct. 7	Kansas, W, 3-0
Oct. 10	Kansas State, W, 3-0
Oct. 14	at Baylor, W, 3-0
Oct. 17	at Missouri, W, 3-1
Oct. 21	Iowa State, L, 3-2
Oct. 24	Oklahoma, W, 3-1
Oct. 28	at Texas Tech, W, 3-0
Oct. 30	at Texas, L, 3-0
Nov. 4	Missouri, W, 3-0
Nov. 7	at Iowa State, W, 3-0
Nov. 13	Texas A&M, 7 p.m.
Nov. 18	Baylor, 7 p.m.
Nov. 21	at Kansas, 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 25	at Kansas State, 7 p.m.
Nov. 28	Colorado, 7 p.m.
Dec. 4-5	NCAA 1st/2nd Rounds, TBA
Dec. 11-12	*NCAA Regionals, TBA
Dec. 17	NCAA Semifinals, Finals
	* at Qwest Center, Omaha
	^ at Bob Devaney Sports Center

Basketball

CONNIE YORI

BY BRIAN ROSENTHAL

Yori says Huskers have talent to win championship

Every night through the first week of basketball practice, Connie Yori would arrive home, and her husband would ask how practice went.

And every night, Yori would smile and say, "Great."

She meant it, too.

"He said, 'What's wrong with you? You are never this positive,'" Yori said. "And I said, 'Well, you know, honey, I'm a realist. I'm not an optimist. I'm not a pessimist, but I'm a realist. I'm real excited about our team.'"

Yori, who's entering her eighth season as head coach of the Nebraska women's basketball team, even told reporters at the Big 12 Conference's media day that her team has many pieces in place to push for a conference championship.

"And I've never even used those words in this setting," she said.

Nebraska, picked by league coaches to finish sixth in the Big 12, returns six players with starting experience, including senior Kelsey Griffin, who missed last season while recovering from foot surgery.

Not only is Griffin returning "in the best shape she's ever been in," according to Yori, but Nebraska is deeper, more talented and more experienced across the board.

"We have enough talent," Yori said. "Are we



the most talented team in the league? No. But we have enough talent. We have a lot of really hard workers in our program."

Yori said she's impressed with the way her players have held themselves accountable in the off-season.

"We've got great character in our program," she said. "And on top of it, we've got great experience and depth. A lot of positives. You know, I could find a couple negatives, but I'm trying to stay as a realist right now."

Nebraska struggled last season without Griffin, a 6-foot-2 forward from Eagle River, Alaska. The Huskers were 15-16 overall and 6-10 in the Big 12, tying for seventh, but still advanced to the post-season for a sixth consecutive season.

"We weren't a bad team last year," Yori said. "We just played against great competition every night, and our record didn't reflect the quality of the team we were in a lot of ways."

Now, with six seniors, Nebraska is one of the most experienced teams in a conference that loses 50 seniors.

Leading the way is Griffin, who two years ago averaged 15.3 points and 7.2 rebounds to lead the Huskers to the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

"She looks really, really good," Yori said. "She is, right now, as fit as she's ever been. She was out for almost 13 months, and for her to have the fitness level that she has right now is a credit to her for what she did in rehab despite the fact she really couldn't be on her foot."

"Coaches say any time your best player can be your hardest worker, it makes it pretty easy to coach. Right now, Kelsey's our best player, and we have a lot of players who work hard, but she's the leader of the pack in that area."

Nebraska also returns senior Cory Montgomery, a forward who rose to the

occasion last season in Griffin's absence. Battling injury herself, Montgomery averaged nearly 20 points and nine rebounds over the second half of the Big 12 season.

"She's the most underrated player in our league," Yori said of Montgomery.

Nebraska also will be deeper at guard, with returning starters Yvonne Turner, Dominique Kelley and Kaityln Burke, along with letterwinners Nicole Neals and Kala Kuhlmann and incoming freshman Lindsey Moore and redshirted freshman Layne Reeves.

"That's one of the things that hurt last year was depth," Yori said. "We want to be a running team, and you can't be a running team if you don't have depth. So we're trying to put a square peg into a round hole last year, and this year all of a sudden we've got great depth, really at every position, and particularly in the post."

Hence, Yori's overall excitement.

"I feel like on paper," she said, "this should be the best team that we've had since I've been at Nebraska."

GETTING UP

One reporter at Big 12 media day asked Yori if Griffin is still as athletic as she was, or if Griffin was depending more on her basketball smarts and experience.

Yori gave an example that shows Griffin is indeed still a good athlete.

"I mean, she can get up, and she loves to scare me to death after practice and start hanging on the rim," Yori said. "It's like, 'Quit doing that,' you know? We don't need another injury."

Yori said Griffin is a better athlete than most people think, that she can run the floor as well as any post player in the league, and has also improved her lateral quickness.

"She jumps really well," Yori said, "but she's also very strong."

TRIMMER ANDERSON

Senior Ryan Anderson has dropped 20 pounds since the end of last season, all with one goal in mind.

"To get on that wing, man," Anderson said.

The 6-foot-4 guard on the Nebraska men's basketball team played inside last season, mostly out of necessity, as Nebraska had the nation's shortest team. That's not the case anymore, and Anderson, who's now at 190 pounds, said he's worked to improve his quickness on the perimeter.

"Different game out there," he said. "But I'm still strong. I can still bang in the post. I know what it's like down there."

Anderson averaged 7.1 points and 3.8 rebounds last season. **N**

2009 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

Nov. 3	Pittsburg State (exh), W, 68-54
Nov. 8	Nebraska-Kearney (exh), W, 89-47
Nov. 13	Davidson, 7:05 p.m.
Nov. 15	at UNLV, TBA
Nov. 19	Idaho State, 7:05 p.m.
Nov. 22	Washington State, 2:05 p.m. <i>Saint Mary's Hilton Tournament</i>
Nov. 27	UALR, at Moraga, Calif., TBA
Nov. 28	at Saint Mary's College, TBA
Dec. 3	South Dakota, 7:05 p.m.
Dec. 5	Miami, at Coral Gables, Fla., TBA
Dec. 9	Creighton, 7:05 p.m.
Dec. 13	Northern Illinois, 2:05 p.m.
Dec. 20	LSU, 1:05 p.m.
Dec. 30	Albany, 7:05 p.m.
Jan. 4	at Vermont, TBA
Jan. 9	at Iowa State, TBA
Jan. 12	Texas, 7:05 p.m.
Jan. 16	at Baylor, TBA
Jan. 23	Kansas State, TBA
Jan. 27	at Texas Tech, 7 p.m.
Jan. 30	at Colorado, TBA
Feb. 3	Oklahoma State, 7:05 p.m.
Feb. 6	Texas A&M, TBA
Feb. 10	at Kansas, 7 p.m.
Feb. 13	at Missouri, TBA
Feb. 17	Iowa State, 7:05 p.m.
Feb. 20	Colorado, TBA
Feb. 24	at Oklahoma, 7 p.m.
Feb. 27	Missouri, TBA
Mar. 3	Kansas, 7:05 p.m.
Mar. 6	at Kansas State, TBA
Mar 11-14	at Big 12 Championships
Mar 20-23	NCAA First & Second Rounds
Mar 27-30	NCAA Regionals
Apr 4-6	NCAA Women's Final Four at San Antonio, Texas (Alamodome)

Around the Horn

TUCKER LANE



WRESTLING Tucker Lane ready for big lights

BY TOMMY DAHLK

Tucker Lane's dad, Larry, gave him a lot of wrestling tips growing up, such as how to work the crowd and use a steel chair as a weapon.

Well, that might not have been the most important wrestling advice Larry ever gave his son, but Larry Lane, who wrestled collegiately at the University of Northern Colorado and professionally from 1973-1983 under the stage names "Red Dog" Lane and "Cowboy" Larry Lane, found ways to give some pro wrestling tutelage to his son.

"When we were little, we'd go out and practice," Tucker said. "We'd practice our regular wrestling moves and sometimes

would have two practices, one where we'd work on my high school wrestling moves and then he'd show us his headlocks and body slams. It was fun."

Although he might not be ready to compete at Wrestlemania this year, Tucker is becoming a star on the collegiate level. The Huskers' sophomore heavyweight from Redvale, Colo., made the NCAA Championships last year and finished third in the Big 12 Tournament.

As a redshirted freshman, Lane was pitted against college wrestling's equivalents to Hulk Hogan and "Macho Man" Randy Savage. Lane twice battled against opponents ranked nationally in the top three of the heavyweight division during the stretch run of the regular season.

Just as Ric Flair states, "In order to be the man, you have to beat the man," Lane said it was a great to go up against such great competition as a freshman.

"That's the reason you come to Nebraska," he said. "You know you are going to wrestle the best competition in the nation. Being able to wrestle the best competition every week really leaves me with nothing to wonder about."

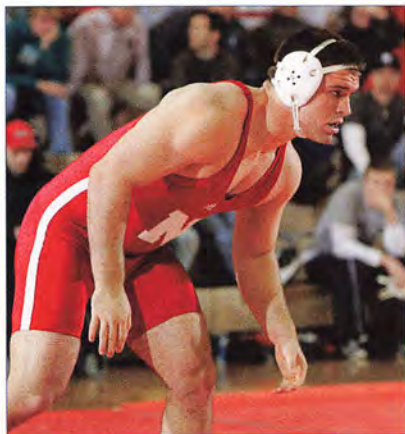
After his successful first year, Lane said he's worked hard on the details of his technique, which can help put him over the top.

With a season of experience under his belt, Lane hopes to win a few more matches at the NCAA Championships this spring at the Qwest Center Omaha.

But does he plan on winning a few titles at Madison Square Garden down the road?

Lane isn't positive he'll follow "Cowboy" Larry Lane's footsteps in the squared circle, but said he won't rule it out. Right now, however, he wants to focus on winning titles for Nebraska.

"It would be fun," Lane said about professional wrestling. "But I haven't thought about it much right now because I still have my goals to accomplish at the collegiate level. It is something my dad and I have talked about, but never too seriously." **N**



HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED TEAMSTORE



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SEEING THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN - For many years, comedian **BOB HOPE** introduced the Associated Press All-America football team on his television Christmas special. Cornhusker center **MARK TRAYNOWICZ** was selected to the team as a senior in 1984. Traynowicz began his career at Nebraska as an offensive tackle, the position at which he backed up **JEFF KWAPICK** in 1982. Then he moved to center, succeeding two-time All-American and two-time Outland Trophy winner **DAVE RIMINGTON**, starting for two seasons there and earning first-team all-conference recognition both seasons. He was a consensus All-American in 1984, as well as a first-team Academic All-American. Hope joked in introducing the 6-foot-6, 265-pound Traynowicz: "Yeh, Mark is the big center for the Nebraska Cornhuskers. He feels he has to play extra hard because from his point of view, the other 10 players are upside down." Others on the 1984 All-America first-team offense included Boston College quarterback **DOUG FLUTIE** and Pittsburgh lineman **BILL FRALIC**, a three-time selection. You can find the Hope All-America segment from 1984 on YouTube.

GAMES REMEMBERED

Nov. 14, 1970 • at Memorial Stadium



First place in the Big Eight was at stake. A Kansas State victory would have given the Wildcats a half-game lead over Nebraska, which had one conference game remaining – against rival Oklahoma. Kansas State came to town with the Big Eight's top-ranked defense and the conference's career-passing leader in quarterback **LYNN DICKEY**, while Nebraska was first in the conference in total offense.

The offense got a boost from the defense, which intercepted seven Dickey passes, the last of which monster back **DAVE MOROCK** returned 43 yards for the Cornhuskers' final touchdown.

Cornerbacks **JOE BLAHAK** and **BILL KOSCH**, high school teammates from Columbus, Neb., combined for five of the interceptions. Blahak had three, tying a school record set the previous season by **DANA STEPHENSON**. **RIC LINDQUIST** (1979) and Matt O'Hanlon (2009) have since tied the record as well.

Linebacker and co-captain **JERRY MURTAUGH** picked off the first pass on the fifth play of the game's opening series to give Nebraska possession at the Wildcats' 30-yard line. Then, on the Cornhuskers' first play from scrimmage, wingback **JOHNNY RODGERS** scored on a reverse.

Nebraska scored 27 points in a 3:58 stretch beginning late in the third quarter. By then, however, the outcome had long since been decided.

BOB DEVANEY: "This was one of our finest wins. We've had greater days offensively, but not a combination of offense and defense." (As reported in Big 8 Banner)

Nebraska 51, Kansas State 13

Kansas State	0	7	0	6	--	13
Nebraska	14	7	16	14	--	51

- (N) Johnny Rodgers 30 run (Paul Rogers kick)
- (N) Joe Orduna 3 run (Rogers kick)
- (KS) Mike Montgomery 9 pass Lynn Dickey (Max Arreguin kick)
- (N) Orduna 16 run (Rogers kick)
- (N) Rogers 23 field goal
- (N) Orduna 1 run (kick failed)
- (N) Dan Schneiss 12 pass Jerry Tagge (Rogers kick)
- (N) Orduna 2 run (Rogers kick)
- (N) Dave Morock 43 pass interception (Rogers kick)
- (KS) Chris Chapin 1 run (pass failed)

Attendance: 67,894

DO YOU REMEMBER?

► Nebraska set a school single-season record with 30 interceptions in 1970 – when statistical totals didn't include bowl games, otherwise the total would have been 31. The previous record, 27, was set the year before. In any case, the record held until 2003, when Bo Pelini was Frank Solich's defensive coordinator and the Cornhuskers intercepted 32 passes.

► Kansas State quarterback Lynn Dickey finished 10th in voting for the Heisman Trophy. The Heisman winner was Stanford quarterback **JIM PLUNKETT**, who was followed in the voting by quarterbacks **JOE THEISMANN** of Notre Dame and **ARCHIE MANNING** of Mississippi.

► Among the top 10 songs at that time were "I'll Be There" by the Jackson Five, "Cracklin' Rosie" by Neil Diamond and "We've Only Just Begun" by the Carpenters.

► Valentino's pizza had only one location in Lincoln in 1970, its original home at 35th and Holdrege. Shakey's Pizza Parlor & Ye Public House was a popular national franchise.

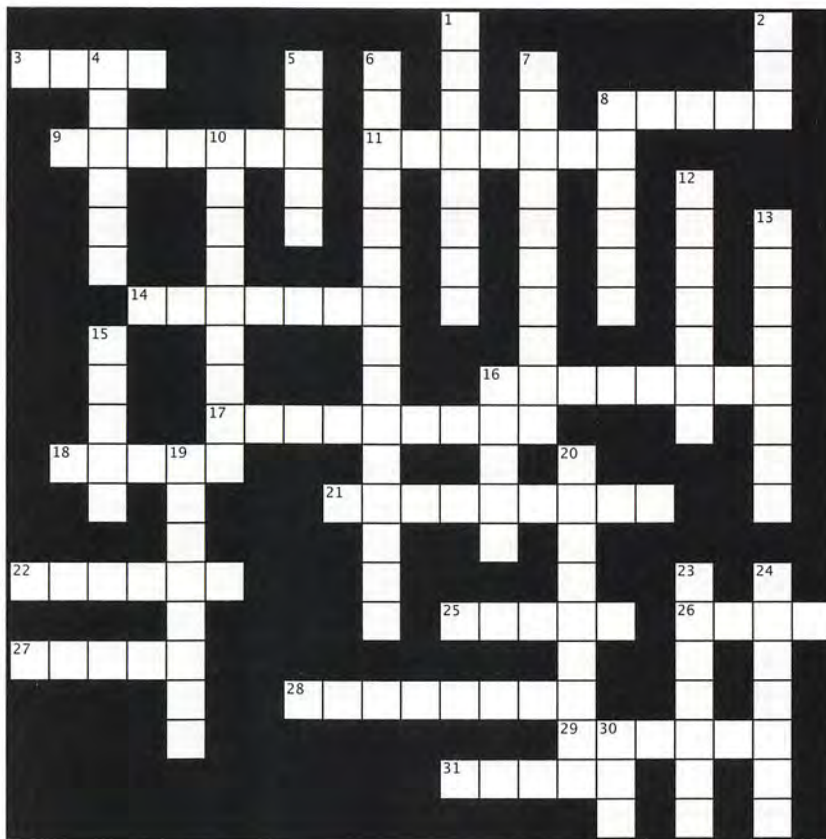
CROSSWORD & TRIVIA

ACROSS

3. Network for NU-Kansas State telecast
8. Wears No. 65
9. Wears No. 67
11. Ex-Husker offensive lineman now with New York Jets
14. Had 3 interceptions vs. Oklahoma
16. Nov. 27 opponent
17. City for Big 12 Championship game
18. Ex-Husker kicker now with St. Louis Rams
21. Nickname before Cornhuskers
22. Kansas State school color
25. NU offensive lineman who played at Kansas State
26. Scored only touchdown in NU-Oklahoma game
27. Niles Paul's hometown
28. Kansas State nickname
29. NU assistant who played at Kansas State
31. Wears No. 78

DOWN

1. Phillip Dillard's home state
2. Blocked field goal vs. Oklahoma
4. Former Kansas State head coach
5. Speedy Kansas State receiver, kick returner
6. Opponent in 2010 opener
7. 2010 non-conference road opponent
8. Kansas State head coach
10. Kansas State campus location
12. 2008 Kansas State quarterback now in the NFL
13. Will Compton's home state
15. Wears No. 74
16. Jared Crick's hometown
19. Wears No. 68
20. Barry Turner's home state
23. 1992 Outland Trophy winner
24. 1993 Butkus Award winner
30. Kansas State abbreviation



Answers will appear in the Nov. 27 issue

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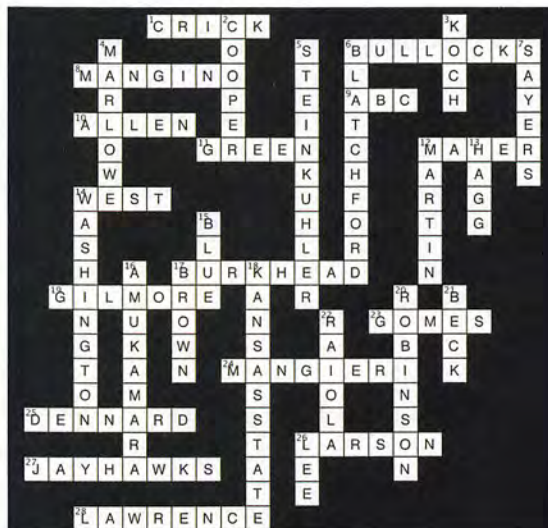
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NOV. 14 CROSSWORD SOLUTION





THE FINAL WORD

BY MIKE BABCOCK

Helu a spark for second straight week

ROY HELU, JR. sat at a folding table, his right shoulder packed in ice, outside the hallway that led from the visitors' locker room, and answered reporters' questions in the chill night air.

The sounds of Ben E. King's "Stand by Me" carried over the fence behind him.

The junior I-back was, typically, self-effacing, crediting those around him, his teammates. Fullback Tyler Legate, for example, "did awesome on an edge block," said Helu.

The block came on a play late in the game, after the Cornhuskers had responded to a Kansas touchdown with a touchdown and two-point conversion of their own.

The play in question didn't determine the outcome. However, it could be used to characterize Nebraska's 31-17 victory against a team in freefall.

The Jayhawks had nothing to lose, and bowl eligibility to gain. But they had gone three-and-punt following the touchdown and two-point conversion, which made the score 24-17.

Nebraska faced third-and-10 at its own 37-yard line with 3:16 remaining. Kansas had stopped the clock with the second of its allotted three timeouts. The Jayhawks still had time.

Helu got the ball, as he had on the four previous plays, and ran to his right, toward the Nebraska sideline, with the aid of Legate's block, remember.

Maybe a dozen yards into the run Helu somehow managed to avoid going out-of-bounds, cutting back to his left. He continued to the Kansas 33, where he went down on his own. The play

gained 30 yards. And, more importantly, it effectively ended Jayhawk hopes of a comeback.

The clock continued to run, ostensibly Helu's intention when he cut back – ostensibly, but not the reason. "I did it because I was tired, and when I made the cut, I just didn't trust in where I was going," said Helu. "I didn't know the situation, so I just fell on the ground.

"And spoiled, probably, a good run."

It was hardly a good run spoiled. On the next play, Helu carried again for 9 yards. Then he got a breather. Freshman Dontrayevous Robinson carried three consecutive times.

Kansas used a timeout to stop the clock with 36 seconds remaining.

Six seconds later, Helu was in the end zone from 14 yards out. And Nebraska was in control of its season's destiny. If the Cornhuskers defeat Kansas State in their final home game, they'll represent the North Division in the Big 12 Championship game at Arlington, Texas, on Dec. 5, regardless of what happens in the final regular-season game at Colorado.

If they lose to Kansas State, they won't.

And if they can play as they did against Kansas, particularly in the second half, there's little doubt they'll be chartering a flight to Dallas-Fort Worth the first week in December.

The Cornhuskers were able to finish. "It was a good opportunity, seems like there's been maybe four or five times that we've had that chance, and that was only our second time finishing it on the field," said Helu, who carried 28 times for 156

yards and scored three touchdowns.

The last time Nebraska's offense finished was at Missouri in the conference opener.

It was a team effort, with standout performances by several players besides Helu on offense, among them wide receiver and kick returner Niles Paul and quarterback Zac Lee.

But before talking to reporters, offensive coordinator Shawn Watson glanced at a stat sheet because "I wanted to see what Roy did," Watson said. "I thought Roy played a great game. He's been unbelievable for us these last two weeks . . . showed a lot of courage.

"He's really given us a huge lift as a football team and given our offense a huge jump."

Helu, who had been bothered by a shoulder problem (he was favoring his right shoulder as he left the field after scoring the final touchdown), carried 20 times for 138 yards in the Cornhuskers' 10-3 victory against Oklahoma. "Just having him there is big," said Watson.

Helu has now rushed for 962 yards and nine touchdowns on the season.

"The thing we wanted to say is, we got our mojo back," Watson said.

An element of that mojo was the I-back in the No. 10 jersey.

Just over halfway through Helu's brief post-game interview, Nebraska defensive coordinator Carl Pelini emerged from the locker room and headed toward the team buses.

"Way to go, Roy," Pelini yelled with a smile.

"What's up, Carl?" Helu replied. **N**



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People will be watching, oh they'll
definitely be watching. And we are
ready to take on all the challenges.**



2009 Nebraska Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Location	Time/Results
Sat, Sep 05	Florida Atlantic	Memorial Stadium	W, 49-3
Sat, Sep 12	Arkansas State	Memorial Stadium	W, 38-9
Sat, Sep 19	at Virginia Tech	at Blacksburg, VA	L, 15-16
Sat, Sep 26	Louisiana-Lafayette	Memorial Stadium	W, 55-0
Thu, Oct 08	at Missouri *	at Columbia, MO	W, 27-12
Sat, Oct 17	Texas Tech *	Memorial Stadium	L, 10-31
Sat, Oct 24	Iowa State *	Memorial Stadium	L, 7-9
Sat, Oct 31	at Baylor *	at Waco, TX	W, 20-10
Sat, Nov 07	Oklahoma *	Memorial Stadium	W, 10-3
Sat, Nov 14	at Kansas *	at Lawrence, KS	W, 31-17
Sat, Nov 21	Kansas State *	Memorial Stadium	6:45 p.m., ESPN/2
Fri, Nov 27	at Colorado *	at Boulder, CO	2:30 p.m., ABC
Sat, Dec 5	Big 12 Championship	Arlington, TX (Dallas Cowboys New Stadium)	7 p.m., ABC

* Conference games

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